銃皇無尽のファフニール XIV

レインボウ・ピース

ツカサ

Illustration

梱枝りこ

講談社ラノベ文庫

Table of Contents

Illustration
Prologue
Chapter 1 – Universal Ruler Shamash
Part 1
Part 2
Part 3
Part 4
Chapter 2 – The Clear Dragon at Battle Again
Part 1
Part 2
Part 3
Part 4
Chapter 3 – The Previous Night’s Game Party
Part 1
Part 2
Part 3
Part 4
Chapter 4 – Rainbow Colored Piece
Part 1
Part 2
Part 3
Epilogue
Afterword
Credits

銃皇無尽のファフニール

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XIV

ツカサ

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「兄さん、見ていてくださいっ！
これが私の……精一杯のアプローチですっ!!」

ふにゅん。
手の平に柔らかな感触。
布越しに伝わってくる熱と鼓動。

「へ？」

目の前の光景に理解が追いつかない。
何故か俺の手が、
深月の左胸に押しつけられている。
慎ましやかな妹の胸の膨らみに、
俺の指が沈み込んでいる。

物部深月
Mitsuki Mononobe

「ん。このままでいい……このままが、いい」
「まあ、レンがそう言うなら……」
少し安堵する俺に、
レンはとても小さな声で囁いた。
「……ん。
お兄ちゃんの匂い、好き。
お兄ちゃんの手も……大好き」
まるで告白のようなレンの言葉にドキリとする。
レン・ミヤザワ
Ren Miyazawa

「――え？」
戸惑っている間に、
小さく柔らかな唇が俺の口に触れる。
――どくん。
その瞬間、左手に微かな痛みが走り、
遅れて熱さがやってきた。
ヴリトラ
Vritra

銃皇無尽のファフニール

TABLE OF CONTENTS

013 —— 序　章
029 —— 第一章　転輪のシャマシュ
070 —— 第二章　再戦のクリアドラゴン
118 —— 第三章　前夜のゲームパーティー
180 —— 第四章　虹色のピース
236 —— 終　章

銃皇無尽のファフニール

UNLIMITED FAFNIR

STORY

突如現れたドラゴンと総称される怪物たちにより、世界は一変した――。

ドラゴンの力を持った、“D”と呼ばれる異能の少女たちが集まる学園・ミッドガル。

この学園に入学することになった、唯一の男の“D”である少年・物部悠は、イリスや妹の深月らをはじめとするクラスメイトたちとともに、ドラゴンとの戦いに身を投じる。

悠たちの活躍もあり、7体のドラゴンは表向きには世界から姿を消した。

しかし、漆黒の不可知領域が同時多発し、この世界すべてを呑み込まんとする。

自らを犠牲にそれを止めようとした深月をなんとか止め、サード・ドラゴン――“真滅”のラグナロックを滅ぼした悠たち。

そして彼らは、ついにその姿を現した“終焉”のアンゴルモアと対峙し――

物部深月
Mitsuki Mononobe

三年ぶりに再会した悠の妹。ミッドガル学園の生徒会長であり、竜伐隊の隊長も務めている。架空武装は“五閃の神弓（ブリューナグ）”。
Birthday：3/3

物部悠
Yuu Mononobe

世界でただ一人の男の“D”。軍事組織ニブルに所属していたが、ミッドガルへの異動により、イリスや深月たちと一緒に学園に通うことになった。
Birthday：12/25

イリス・フレイア
Iris Freyja

悠がミッドガルではじめて出会った少女。明るい性格だが、クラスでは落ちこぼれ。架空武装は“双翼の杖（ケリュケイオン）”。
Birthday：7/10

CHARACTER

UNLIMITED
FAFNIR

ティア・ライトニング
Tear Lightning

転入生の少女。自分のことを人間ではなくドラゴンだと認識していた。悠にとても懐いている。

Birthday：10/2

フィリル・クレスト
Firill Crest

趣味は読書の、物静かな少女。実はエルリア公国の王女様。架空武装は“架空の魔書（ネクロノミコン）”。

Birthday：4/1

リーザ・ハイウォーカー
Lisa Highwalker

お姉さん肌の少女。面倒見の良い性格で、仲間のことをとても大切に考えている。架空武装は“射抜く神槍（グングニル）”。

Birthday：5/15

ロキ・ヨツンハイム
Loki Jötunheimr

軍事組織ニブルの少佐。悠のかつての直属の上司。

Birthday：11/21

レン・ミヤザワ
Ren Miyazawa

飛び級をしている天才少女。上位元素生成能力（ダークマター）が非常に高い。架空武装は“粉砕する灼鎚（ミョルニル）”。

Birthday：6/12

アリエラ・ルー
Ariella Lu

ボーイッシュな少女。武道の経験がある。架空武装は“牙の盾（アイギス）”。

Birthday：9/27

ヴリトラ
Vritra

“黒”のヴリトラと呼称されるドラゴン。25年前に現れ、一度姿を消したが、人の形をとって再び現れた。

Birthday：不明

キーリ・スルト・ムスペルヘイム
Kili Surtr Muspellzheimr

ドラゴン信奉者団体“ムスペルの子ら”のリーダー。上位元素を熱エネルギーに変換する“禍炎界（ムスペルヘイム）”という技を操る。

Birthday：不明

Prologue

.
Mitsuki and I returned alive from inside the darkness.
We followed the light that everyone shined on us—.
Voices of happiness, laughter, and joyful tears burst out.
However the battle wasn't over by any means.
This was the beginning.
Right now, the end of the world was going to arrive.
The last unknown territory—the black egg that was containing the darkness was giving birth to the calamity.
However we wouldn't accept such conclusion.
We yelled with all our strength in order to hold back the darkness of demise that was overflowing from the unknown territory.
The name of the Ninth Dragon that Shinomiya Miyako entrusted to us—.
.
「Show your form—"Demise" Angolmois!」
.
Neun's light cleaved the darkness at the same time when we announced the calamity's name.
「————————!!」
I continued to yell. Because the blue light to define this indefinite existence was contained in this voice.
It was dazzling. But I didn't close my eyes.
My throat felt painful as though it was burned. Even so I raised my voice.
Ragnarok was annihilated and Atlantis was going to sink to the bottom of the sea once more. Everyone and I were facing this world swallowing darkness together on this land.
Iris, Mitsuki, Tia, Lisa, Firill, Ariella, Ren, Kili—everyone was also desperately wringing out their voice to illuminate the darkness with this light—"Shamash".
Yes, the emptiness before us was none other than our enemy.
Pure black darkness. The lump of End Matter. The Ninth Dragon where "Heavy Tremors" Nova aka Shinomiya Miyako was absorbed as its core—Angolmois.
The world would be swallowed by darkness if Angolmois was left alone. All lives on earth would perish.

That was why we were trying to grant “shape” to the indefinite darkness with Neun’s light.
If we could define the darkness as Angolmois and manifested it as an existence with shape, we would be able to prevent the darkness from spreading instantly.
However—.
—Was this……Angolmois’s form?
The outline that was appearing inside the light shook my body.
It made me wanted to vomit and avert my gaze.
Calling it hideous wasn’t really correct.
The word disgusting also didn’t really fit.
It was simply something that I purely didn’t want to see.
That was the kind of form it had.
The thing that anyone feared and continuously averted their gaze and mind from—”death”. This was the manifestation of it.
Angolmois appeared before us in exactly such shape.
Its body was formed from only the skulls of every creature. Its nine heads were also similar, with one of them was a single gigantic skull.
To describe it concisely……it was a nine headed dragon that was made from bones.
It had no flesh, skin, or organ. Not even a brain for its mind to reside in. It was a death dragon that was only made up from a gathering of the corpses of living things.
By all rights it should be impossible for it to move or even think. But it floundered and roared inside the blue light.
.
VOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOONN!!
.
The roar was covered with agony, resentment, and rage. It made my body froze.
Death dragon Angolmois was radiating a clear hostility toward us.
All its nine heads turned this way and bared their crooked fangs.
—Crap……!
Neun’s light was only granting shape to the darkness. It couldn’t destroy Angolmois. It would attack us if we stayed here. In order to sever the light illuminating it. But…….
—Just a bit more! Make it in time!
Angolmois was enveloped in black mist.
That was the End Matter that still hadn’t taken form.
The “solidification” by Neun’s light wasn’t complete.
—Quick! Please!
If we didn’t cram all the darkness into “the vessel called Angolmois”……if even just a little of it overflowed……End Matter would gradually spread to the whole world.

If it was with Neun’s light that came from everyone combining their strength, most likely it wouldn’t take that long……just a few more seconds──.
Bam……――――.
A faint strange noise reached my ear at that moment.
Then Neun’s light immediately weakened.
「Iris-san!?」
I heard Mitsuki’s quavering voice and turned around──there I saw Iris’s figure lying face down on the ground.
Her face was pale, and her whole body was convulsing.
It seemed she lost consciousness. She didn’t even react to Mitsuki’s voice.
「Wha……?」
I didn’t understand the situation. The inside of my head was pure white.
──Did she get attacked? No, but there isn’t any external wound on her body…….
「Mononobe-kun, Neun’s light is gradually weakening you know!?」
Firill’s voice resounded.
There was no time to be in a daze. Angolmois roared with faint darkness covering its body. It was walking toward here.
「Angolmois is coming!」
Tia yelled anxiously.
The ground shook and wind blew. The slightly remaining Ragnarok’s mist was scattered and seawater flooded in from all directions.
「It’s impossible to continue any further! We have succeeded in solidifying the majority of the End Matter, so the darkness shouldn’t be able to swallow the world instantly! Let’s retreat from here for now!」
Lisa who grasped the situation earlier lifted up Iris in her arms and flew to the sky. I returned to my senses seeing that.
「Kuh……I’ll buy us time! Anti-Gravity!!」
I lifted my hand toward Angolmois while yelling.
I focused my mind to my forehead and activated the authority I succeeded from the “White” Leviathan in its complete form.
Anti-gravity material was created in front of the approaching death dragon.
A radiant white light spread like a ripple. It blocked Angolmois’s advance.
However it only slowed it down. I couldn’t push it back.
Looking closer, there was a faint rainbow circle that appeared in front of Angolmois.
──That was Nova’s power that Shinomiya Miyako used……!
Perhaps that power was inherited with her becoming the core.
Anti-Gravity and Nova’s gravity field neutralized each other. At the end the advantage belonged to me, but Anti-Gravity couldn’t exert its effect sufficiently because of the counterbalancing act.
Angolmois that was transformed into a giant dragon with great mass forcefully advanced inside the repulsive force field. Just where did it keep such power inside that body that was made from only bones…….

「Mononobe-kun too, hurry!」
「Onii-chan!」
Ariella and Ren who had flown away first hurried me up.
「Yeah, I know!」
I flew to the sky by enveloping myself in repulsive force field.
I slowed down Angolmois's approach with Anti-Gravity while heading to battleship Naglfar that should be standing by at the nearby sky.
「Yuu! What in the world happened with Iris-chan!?」
Kili flew in the sky while asking me. Iris who was carried in Lisa's arms was still limp. It seemed that her consciousness hadn't returned.
「……I don't know. But, it's clear that her condition isn't normal. Let's take her to Naglfar quickly.」
I suppressed my impulse that wanted to check Iris's condition right away while replying like that. Right now our priority was to get away from Angolmois.
Atlantis's townscape was sinking into the sea below us. The flooding seawaters crashed on each other and whirlpools formed here and there.
「Sayonara……」
Atla's voice came from the terminal in my pocket. She was the machine intelligence that managed Atlantis civilization. She was saying her farewell to her birthplace.
「Nii-san! I can see Naglfar!」
Mitsuki who was flying at the forefront pointed forward. With Ragnarok's mist clearing up, there was nothing blocking the sight.
I followed Mitsuki's fingertip and found the figure of NIFL's battleship──Naglfar at far distance above the raging sea. It seemed that it was moving in hovering mode.
「Ah──I can hear something from the communicator just now!」
Firill put her hand over her ear while yelling.
I had taken off the communicator because the noise from it was horrible after we entered inside the mist. And so I took out the tiny communicator from my pocket and put it on my ear.
「──This is Naglfar. Reply if anyone is listening. This is Naglfar──」
Then I could suddenly hear Shinomiya-sensei's voice. I opened my mouth.
「This is Mononobe Yuu. The signal come through.」
「Aa, we're finally connected──」
Shinomiya-sensei let out a relieved voice. Then next a deep male voice cut it off and entered my ear.
「Second Lieutenant Mononobe, we have roughly grasped the situation after Atla over here and over there synchronized. It seemed you used the so called Neun's authority to transform End Matter into that bone dragon but……what are you planning to do now?」
The one who asked me that dispassionately was my former superior, Major Loki who was serving as Naglfar's captain right now.

「The End Matter's transformation isn't complete but……it's impossible for us to continue the mission any further. We're retreating for now to rally ourselves.」
I glanced at Iris who was carried by Lisa and answered. No, looking closer it wasn't just Iris. I could see color of deep fatigue from everyone. Even if we continued opposing the enemy with Neun's authority, perhaps someone else would also collapse at this rate.
「Understood. Then as soon as all of you land on Naglfar, we will retreat from this battlefield. But──answer me this one question, Second Lieutenant Mononobe. Do you really think that we will be able to run?」
I was startled by that question and looked behind.
The figure of Angolmois whose advance was hindered by the gigantic white repulsive force field should be there. But the Anti-Graivty material was already mostly dyed black. The repulsive force field was about to vanish.
「The Anti-Gravity material, it's eroded by the End Matter!」
Tia who also looked back like me screamed.
「Everyone, let's hurry!」
Together with Lisa's voice, we mustered our remaining strength and sped up.
Naglfar's outline was getting bigger. Naglfar was already turning its bow to the opposite direction of Angolmois.
Bakin──behind us an abnormal sound that shook the air resounded.
Most likely the Anti-Gravity material that was eroded by End Matter was about to break.
「Just a bit more! Do your best!」
Ariella encouraged everyone.
「Onii-chan──there is someone on the deck.」
Ren found a small human silhouette on the approaching deck and raised her voice.
「Is that……Okaa-sama?」
Kili let out a perplexed voice.
──Vritra.
The girl with the appearance of Kili but far younger was staring straight toward us with her long black hair fluttering in the wind.
「Why is she there……」
I was confused, but Mitsuki who wasn't wearing a communicator spoke anxiously.
「Nii-san! Focus on giving the takeoff signal right now rather than thinking about that!」
「G-got it.」
I felt a pleading for something from Vritra's gaze, even so first I carried out what I should do.
I landed on the deck with everyone. At the same time I yelled into the communicator.
「Everyone has landed! Please takeoff!」

「Roger that, captain!」
The reply that came back didn't come from Major Loki and Jeanne's cheerful voice.
Bluish white flame burst out from the rear engine of Naglfar. The battleship floating midair began to accelerate.
—*Bakin-!!*
However the strange sound of destruction that rang out once more made me turned around.
「Tsu—!?」
One of Angolmois's heads tore through the weakened repulsive force field and headed this way.
Rather than flying, it was the neck stretching out with astonishing speed. Naglfar that had only started to accelerate was clearly slower than it.
「Mononobe Yuu! It will catch up at this rate! Let's intercept it!」
Lisa said that and readied her fictitious weapon that had the form of spear. However Vritra raised her voice sharply.
「Fool! The darkness will overflow once more if thou carelessly attack and destroy its vessel!」
Everyone who was about to intercept the attack stopped moving and looked at Vritra. Vritra glared at the approaching head of Angolmois and continued speaking with a strong tone.
「Leave this to me. I'm the only one who can seal its movement in this situation! Take off this restrain from me right away!」
Vritra pointed at the green vine wrapped around her white slender neck. It was a restrain that Tia applied on her to obstruct material conversion. Vritra would be able to use her power freely if it was taken off.
「Okaa-sama—you're planning to have your binding removed amidst this turmoil? Just what are you scheming?」
Kili frowned in suspicion. Mitsuki was also looking at me with hesitation.
「Nii-san, won't it be dangerous to free Vritra……」
But there was no time for argument. The head of the death dragon was approaching Naglfar.
Vritra looked around at everyone who hesitated before meeting my gaze at the end.
「I can understand the feeling of everyone for doubting me. But believe me right now. In order to protect this Gaia, I had made use of the other Counter Dragons……all of thee……everything I can use. That's exactly why I won't turn traitor when there is a great enemy invading Gaia right there. I want to fight together with all of thee! That's why please—my comrade!」
I made my decision seeing the earnest light residing in her eyes.
「I—believe in Vritra. Tia, take off her restrain!!」
「G-got it!」
Tia reacted to my voice and ran toward Vritra. And then she touched her collar.

With just that the black dragon—”Black” Vritra was easily released from her restrain.
「My comrade, I thank thee for thy trust.」
Vritra touched her neck that had been released from the binding and faced the back of the ship—at one of Angolmois’s head that was heading here.
「Then, feast thy eyes at my power. If that Ninth Dragon has obtained form—the method to seal it is extremely simple.」
Vritra said that and lifted her hand.
Then countless large lumps of Dark Matter were formed around Angolmois.
Then at the next moment—Angolmois’s head that was heading here sunk into the sea with a splash.
「Wha……」
I gulped seeing the unbelievable sight.
It wasn’t an application of unseen power like gravity manipulation or anything. The death dragon’s head was pushed to the bottom of the sea by a giant cube—a mere great amount of mass that was converted from Dark Matter.
「That is none other than a crystallization of Adamantine(super heavy substsance). Originally it’s a super heavy material with high density that can only be formed inside black hole—such material is now used as chain to seal that guy.」
Vritra spoke proudly.
The grey cube—super heavy substance had a side that might reach several kilometer. It was created continuously to fuse with the long neck and that tremendous weight pushed down the neck to the bottom of the sea.
Adamantine’s shackle was also formed on the far away main body and its other heads were also sinking to the sea.
And then for the last, a cube with length that might reach dozens of kilometer appeared above Angolmois.
It pressed on the ninth calamity underneath it.
「W-won’t Angolmois get flattened by that and caused the darkness to overflow……?」
Ariella muttered anxiously, but Vritra laughed fearlessly.
「No need to worry. That Adamantine is still in liquid shape. And then it will harden after that guy get swallowed.」
It was just as she said, the Adamantine swallowed Angolmois whole and dragged it to the sea. However because it was too large, the majority of the grey cube was protruding out above the sea.
The neck chasing after us was completely sinking into the sea. It was gone from our sight.
Vritra slowly lowered her hands after confirming the result.
「Fumu……we can buy a little time with this. Based from the speed it eroded the Anti-Gravity substance just now, this many mass should hold for several days at least.」
Vritra exhaled a little.

Silence filled the deck for some time while wind was blowing strongly.
"Brute force restrain using a lot of mass……it's a feat that we can't possibly do even if we want with our Dark Matter production amount."
Kili muttered in exasperation.
"Vritra's power—it's outrageous as expected when seeing it again like this."
"Nn……amazing."
Ariella spoke in admiration. Ren's eyes still widened like saucer in astonishment.
However Vritra paid no mind to everyone's reaction and looked toward Lisa.
"Something at this level isn't a big deal at all. More importantly, the more pressing problem is……"
Vritra wasn't looking at Lisa, but Iris who was in her arms.
I also gasped and ran toward Iris.
"Lisa, let's bring Iris inside for now! Atla, show us to Naglfar's infirmary!"
I also called at the terminal inside my pocket while carrying the limp Iris on my back. Her body was cold and slightly trembling.
Did something happen to Iris while illuminating Angolmois with light…….
I harbored a bad premonition while heading to the door that connected to inside the ship with a long stride.

Chapter 1 – Universal Ruler Shamash

Part 1

I—Iris Freya was simply mustering all my strength to the utmost.
In order to push the darkness that wanted to swallow the world, Angolmois into a “shape”, I continued to yell with everything I had.
Neun’s authority that was dwelling inside my voice became bluish white light that cleaved the jet black dome and defined the darkness as bone dragon.
I could feel the light that didn’t vanish even when swallowed by End Matter shining inside myself.
This light illuminated everyone and me—if we had this radiant light that was burning like the sun, surely we should be able to illuminate all the darkness.
Believing that, I mustered the authority that was named “Shamash(The Universe Defining Blue Light)” even more.
—Mononobe has rescued Mitsuki-chan. I was happy……everyone, smiled.
That’s why, I won’t let everything end at this kind of place!
□———!!□
The light intensified even more when I screamed myself hoarse.
However, it was then.
Suddenly, strength left my body.
—Eh……?
I didn’t know what happened.
But, I couldn’t feel the heat that was inside me until just now anymore.
An intense cold attacked me. When I realized, the ground was approaching me. However my arms and legs wouldn’t listen to my command. My sight was turning black.
There was no pain even though my face should have hit the ground. I could faintly hear someone was calling my name.
—W, hy? I……what happened to me? Even though this wasn’t the time to collapse. Even though we had to do something about Angolmois…….
Question and anxiety bloomed inside my head, but the coldness that was invading my body was freezing even my consciousness.
—Monono, be.
Even his face that came to mind was frozen white. My body shivered from the coldness that seeped until the deepest part of me.
.

Part 2

「Iris-san……I wonder if she is alright.」
Mitsuki's small whisper echoed through the narrow and gloomy corridor.
「Right now we can only trust on Shinomiya-sensei and others and wait.」
I──Mononobe Yuu was staring at the closed door of the infirmary while saying that to persuade myself.
「I'm worried……」
Lisa was standing while leaning on the corridor's wall. She muttered that to herself.
In front of Naglfar's infirmary, I, Mitsuki, Lisa, Tia, Firill, Ariella, and Ren, the seven of us were waiting for Iris's examination and treatment to finish.
Shinomiya-sensei, Kili, and Vritra were inside the infirmary. Kili and Vritra were there in order to perform healing using biological conversion in case Iris was wounded.
Normal "D" couldn't create complicated biological tissue using material conversion. Only Vritra and her daughter Kili could possibly do that.
「Iris's body……it was very cold.」
Tia muttered while crouching down. Firill nodded to her words.
「Yeah, that's not normal. Why so suddenly……」
There Ariella turned her gaze to the end of the corridor.
「……I can hear footsteps. This is Jeanne's.」
Then just as Ariella said, a girl with platinum blond hair that was tied behind her head──Jeanne Hortensia turned at the corridor's corner and entered our sight.
「Nn……amazing. Onee-chan, you know that just from footstep.」
Ren muttered in admiration.
「Captain!」
Jeanne came running when she found me.
「What's wrong? Did something happen?
I put myself on guard in case she brought even more bad news in this situation, but Jeanne shook her head.
「Ah, no, I don't have anything to do so I thought to report the current situation to captain directly……I'm also worried about her.」
Jeanne glanced at the infirmary's door and said that. Jeanne too must be worried about Iris's condition.
「……We still don't know how is Iris doing. Though if it's just the examination then they should have finished right now──」

「I see……then I'll report the current situation while waiting. Currently Naglfar is crossing the south Atlantic Ocean toward Africa continent. But the fuel is about to run out, so we are scheduled to resupply midway at an island that belonged to NIFL.」
Jeanne looked around at us and reported about the course of our plan from here.
「What happened to Angolmois?」
It was Lisa who asked that. Then Jeanne showed a bit of hesitation before she suppressed her emotion and answered.
「Based from the observation through surveillance satellite, Angolmois hasn't moved from the spot where Atlantis continent was at. The giant cube that Vritra created became a shackle that is stopping it from moving. But……something like black mist is gradually spreading from the center of Angolmois's body.」
「Black mist──it must be the End Matter.」
Mitsuki said that with a heavy tone. Jeanne nodded.
「Yes, most likely. The "solidification" from Neun's authority seems to be incomplete. However I don't think that what captain and everyone did is pointless. The expansion speed of the black mist is slow. It will take several days until it arrive at other continent. Originally it should be able to swallow the world in the blink of eye.」
Iris collapsed just before Neun's light could cram End Matter wholly into the vessel of Angolmois──that weakened the light.
Because the solidification ended in incomplete state just as Jeanne said, the End Matter was leaking bit by bit.
「But, the result will be the same if we don't take any measure. The spreading End Matter will completely cover this planet sooner or later.」
Ariella shook her head saying that we couldn't be optimistic. Ren looked up to her and declared with a small voice.
「……I think, we can push back the End Matter, if everyone combine their strength again. But──」
Ren turned her gaze at the infirmary where Iris was at.
I recalled Iris's figure that suddenly collapsed and clenched my fist.
「Yeah……we won't be able to completely illuminate Angelmois unless everyone is present. Besides even if Iris get better, it will be too dangerous without first understanding the reason of her collapse.」
In short we had nothing we could do at present.
But, I couldn't possibly say that out loud. We couldn't possibly accept the despair.
Beside me Mitsuki joined the fingers of both her hands and casted her gaze down as though she was praying.
Mitsuki wished to kill herself in order to save at least half the world. I brushed aside her wish and persisted with my selfishness to save the whole world including Mitsuki. That was why──.

「……But, I absolutely will do something about it. If the method that we can think of right now is impossible, I'll form some other plan. Everyone too──please. Lend me your strength and knowledge without giving up.」
I lowered my head while saying that. Small chuckles slipped out from the surrounding.
「You don't even need to ask for that. Even now I'm desperately racking my brain.」
Everyone nodded at Lisa's words.
「If it's knowledge then leave it to Tia! Tia will definitely find the way to beat Angolmois using Yggdrasil's Akashic Record!」
Tia raised her hand energetically and looked at me with a serious expression.
──Come to think of it, I was curious about the "Disasterification" Apocalypse.
At the morning of the day when we charged into Ragnarok's mist, Tia visited my cabin and spoke about her doubt. She said that the seventh calamity was the only strange one. She questioned why the world didn't create Neun's authority to oppose Apocalypse when it attacked.
And now I had obtained the answer to that. Shinomiya Miyako told me just before I got out of the End Matter dome.
Perhaps Tia might think of something if I told her about it. I opened my mouth to do just that, but the infirmary door made a beeping electronic sound at that time that signed the unlocking of the lock.
「Tsu──!」
We turned around at the door. The door opened before our gazes. Shinomiya-sensei was standing with a grave expression there. Kili and Vritra were also visible inside the room.
「Shinomiya-sensei! How is Iris-san──」
Mitsuki hurriedly asked. To that Shinomiya-sensei shook her head with a tense expression.
「……I'm sorry. I can't determine the cause of her condition using the limited examination equipments in Naglfar. She has no external wound. But her temperature keep decreasing even though there shouldn't be any abnormality in her body.」
Shinomiya-sense moved aside after saying that.
──Iris.
I couldn't just stay still and entered inside the infirmary. There I found Iris wrapped in a blanket with intravenous drip connected to her arm.
The oxygen mask that was put over her mouth was slightly cloudy. It was a sign that she was breathing.
Kili who was standing beside Iris's pillow sighed when she saw me.
「Yuu, to be honest──I've already thrown the towel. There is nowhere in her body that need to be healed using biological conversion. But, it looks like Okaa-sama has some kind of idea about this. Listen to what she has to say.」
Vritra stepped forward after Kili urged like that.

「My comrade. This person──Iris Freya fainted when she was in the middle of using Neun's authority correct?」
She asked without any preface. I nodded at her question.
「Yeah, that's right.」
「I see……then the cause of her condition might lie in the authority itself. I heard that all of thee have become able to use the authority fully, do you understand the essence of it now?」
Being asked that, I glanced at Tia who was behind me.
「We have learned a lot about Neun's authority. Everyone should listen too. There is something that Shinomiya Miyako told me.」
「Miyako did……?」
Firill frowned in surprise. I nodded back at her while starting to talk.
「Neun's authority is "light" that illuminate and define everything. But we human doesn't have any organ that produce light, so we didn't know where the authority resides. But I noticed thanks to Iris. How humans define various things using words──」
「Fumu, so you found the location where the authority resides.」
Vritra narrowed her eyes in deep interest.
「Yes──Neun's authority is residing in our "voice". With that we became able to draw out the authority's true strength but……according to Shinomiya Miyako, it seems that this power originally belonged to Apocalypse that was formerly called "Shamash".」
Other than Mitsuki and me, everyone still didn't know about the relationship between Neun's authority and Apocalypse, so they were stirred hearing that.
「Apocalypse was a higher life form that opposed End Matter's erosion the longest……but it was finally swallowed by End Matter just before it reached earth──it seems that it "turned into a calamity" that attacked earth after that.」
「Wait a second. Why is Apocalypse's power manifested as Neun's authority?」
Kili voiced her doubt. That was the same question that I asked Shinomiya Miyako.
「It seems that's also something that Shinomiya Miyako doesn't know the answer. But she said that if Apocalypse managed to devour the world and reincarnate, it might be somewhere very nearby.」
Then Mitsuki added on my explanation.
「Miyaki told me to "search for the light's source"……she told me to "find the sun that illuminate you". She think that will be the key to destroy Angolmois.」
「It's enough knowing that much.」
Vritra spoke up sharply as though to interrupt Mitsuki's words.
「Vritra, do you know something?」
I asked with held breath.

「Yeah, in general. O successor of Yggdrasil. Thou should also understand the situation.」
「Tia?」
I turned my gaze to Tia who succeeded Yggdrasil's power.
「Yep……Tia might understand. Including the reason why Iris is suffering, everything……but, if that's the case then the method to heal her……」
Tia nodded, but her expression was stiff and gloomy.
Cold sweat trickled on my face because the situation seemed to be really bad, but Vritra casually continued.
「Fuh──certainly thou won't be able to do anything. But it's possible to heal her for me.」
I questioned her when hearing that.
「Really!? Then quickly─」
「Thou don't even need to ask. Let's leave the detailed explanation for later, first I shall treat this person. It might become too late for her if we leave her untreated any longer.」
After saying that, Vritra touched Iris's arm that was connected to IV drip and closed her eyes.
「Okaa-sama……we can count on you right?」
Kili turned a sharp gaze to her own mother and asked her with a slightly high pitched voice.
「If my thinking is correct, she will immediately wake up.」
Vritra answered clearly.
I didn't know what Vritra was trying to do, but good complexion was returning to Iris's face as though to prove her words.
But, I wondered why……it felt like the air around us was getting colder in exchange──.
No, there was no change shown in the infirmary's thermometer.
However it felt like there was something lost. There was a sense of uneasiness as though the ground beneath me was getting unstable.
Was Vritra doing something that couldn't be undone?
Such thinking crossed my mind but──.
「Her temperature, blood pressure, heartbeat rate──they are returning to their normal value!」
Jeanne who was watching the monitor that was connected to the measurement devices raised her voice joyfully.
The unknown anxiety vanished from that report and relieve filled my chest.
As long as Iris was saved that was enough.
「I can't believe it……what in the world is going on?」
Shinomiya-sensei was peering into the monitor in disbelief.
And then Vritra pulled out the IV drip's tube from Iris's arm and closed the wound there with biological conversion as the finishing.
Right after that, Iris blinked and opened her eyes. She raised her body in a flash from the bed.

「O-ouch……eh? I don’t have any injury……no wait, why am I wrapped in so many blankets like this? Besides why is everyone──what happened with Angolmois……?」
Iris who was pressing her hand on her arm that had IV drip stuck there just now tilted her head and looked around at us in surprise.
「Iris……」
I reflexively hugged Iris seeing her acting as usual like that.
「Eh!? M-Mononobe? Wah, even Mitsuki-chan──」
Mitsuki was also hugging Iris from the other side of the bed.
「Thank god……I’m really glad that Iris-san is safe.」
Everyone else also gathered around Iris and touched her arm or cheek to ascertain her safety.
「Your body, is warm like normal……」
Lisa sighed in relieve, but Iris yelled from getting mobbed like that.
「W-what’s going on? S-someone explain it to meee!」
Iris’s voice echoed inside the infirmary.
However we were too immersed in our happiness that we couldn’t answer her right away.
.

Part 3

The sky and sea extended endlessly.
Naglfar was crossing the blue world with the sun that was starting to incline toward the west behind it.
Flight travel would consume a lot of fuel, so currently Naglfar was returning by cruising on water. It seemed that our distance with Angolmois was already nearly a thousand kilometer, so we could relax for now.
「—Won't be long now.」
I checked the time with my mobile phone and leaned on the iron railing.
Iris had recovered for the time being, but just in case she was receiving a reexamination right now. Because of that the explanation of the situation from Tia and Vritra was postponed for thirty minutes later in the bridge.
It seemed everyone returned to their cabin for the moment, but I was wasting time at the bridge's outer passage that had good visibility.
The strange vague apprehension in my chest hadn't vanished. I would feel stifled if I stayed inside the cabin.
Kan, kan, kan—.
Then my ears heard footstep walking up the stair of the outer passage.
「Nii-san—so you're in this kind of place.」
And then I turned toward the voice that was calling at me. There I found Mitsuki with an exasperated smile and her hand pressing down on her hair that was fluttering from the sea breeze.
「Are you looking for me?」
She nodded when I asked her and approached me.
「Yes. I've put it off due to the matter with Angolmois and Iris-san but…… there is something that I have to confirm with Nii-san no matter what. Before the battle start again……」
Mitsuki stared at me with a serious expression. She stopped walking at a distance that was half a step closer than the distance that she usually put between us.
At this range I would be able to embrace her if I reached out toward her—we exchanged gaze from such close distance.
「Something you want to confirm?」
I frowned. Mitsuki took a deep breath nervously before she opened her mouth.
「Nii-san—what do you think of the me right now?」
「Eh? What do I think……why are you suddenly—」

I was bewildered by the unclear question. Mitsuki looked down with a grave expression seeing that.
「As expected……it's no good. But, that time Nii-san said to me that even just a little will be fine……you told me that. You even said that you can bet all your assets on it……that was why, I believed Nii-san──」
「Mitsuki……?」
Her voice was small so I couldn't really hear her. I brought my face closer to hear her more clearly, but then Mitsuki raised her face vigorously and grabbed my arm tightly.
Her strength was unexpectedly strong. Mitsuki's face was bright red and there was the color of resolve in her eyes.
「Nii-san, please look! This is my……all out approach-!!」
Funyun
There was a soft sensation on my palm. Heat and heartbeat were transmitted through the cloth.
「Heh?」
My understanding couldn't catch up with the sight before me.
For some reason my hand was being pushed on Mitsuki's left chest. My fingers were sinking into the modest bulge of my little sister chest.
「Nh……a……」
I unconsciously moved my fingers and Mitsuki let slipped a voice that was filled with heat.
However she didn't get angry and stared at me with moistened eyes. Her face was already reddening as though she was boiling inside. Her hand that was grabbing my arm was slightly shaking.
Even so Mitsuki didn't avert her gaze and peering into my eyes──searchingly, looking for something.
I couldn't understand at all how things became like this. But when I noticed Mitsuki's face was already right before my eyes.
I was leaning forward because my arm was pulled. Mitsuki was standing on her toes and brought her face closer toward me.
A warmth touched my lips.
It was a kiss that only lasted for a moment like a peck.
「Nii-san, I love you. I──my feeling, hasn't changed at all.」
Mitsuki's voice was shaking. She was trembling from uneasiness and fear.
「Even if Nii-san changed completely, my most important person will always be Nii-san. That's why……I'll be happy if Nii-san can like me again──no matter how slight it is.」
Even so Mitsuki smiled and told me her feeling.
But perhaps she reached her limit with that. Mitsuki let go of my arm and plopped down on the spot powerlessly.
「Mitsuki……」
I put my hand on my chest. I couldn't breath.
Then my hand felt my heart pounding like alarm bell.

My face was hot. Perhaps my face had gotten as bright red as Mitsuki's face.
「Ah――」
Mitsuki looked up at me who was like that and smiled happily.
「Thank god……Nii-san is embarrassed……it looks like my approach――is a bit effective. It's just as, Nii-san said……」
「N-no, obviously I'll get embarrassed if you do something like that to me. Or rather why so suddenly――」
When I asked her in feverish haste, Mitsuki smiled wryly.
「Nii-san, you still don't get it? Right now there is no End Matter inside me you know? I got cajoled by Nii-san's sweet talk and threw it all away. What would happen if that's the case……Nii-san too should know about it right?」
「Tsu――don't tell me……」
There my mind finally arrived at the reason why Mitsuki did something like this.
「Yes――right now I'm in the future that I feared the most. Nii-san already lost the reason to protect me. Until now the Ninth Dragon was sealed inside me, so Nii-san paid attention to me the most due to your Neun's instinct. But now I don't have that special privilege anymore.」
Mitsuki shook her head sadly.
Seeing that made me felt anger at my own stupidity. I arbitrarily decided that I would face my own change only after Angolmois was defeated but――I was mistaken.
The situation that Mitsuki feared had arrived even without waiting for Angolomois to be destroyed and Neun's instinct vanished.

Yes……thinking about it from my position as the ninth Counter Dragon—as Neun, Mitsuki who was liberated from End Matter had already become an existence that didn’t need special treatment anymore.
I didn’t feel any change in me, even so surely there was something changing inside me without my awareness.
But—.
「Mitsuki, don’t make that kind of face. It’s fine, I……perhaps I have become a me that’s different from what Mitsuki is looking for but……even so—」
I kneeled in front of Mitsuki and hugged her head on my chest.
「—Mitsuki is really important for me. Can you hear……the sound of my heart? My heartbeat is increasing this much from how much I like you.」
Mitsuki tightly grasped my clothes and pressed her ear on my left chest.
「I can hear it……the heart, is pounding hard. Nii-san, said that you will definitely fall for me if I lightly approached you but……it seems that it’s true.」
Mitsuki smiled mischievously and gazed upward at me. I scratched my cheek.
「Well……that’s how it is. But, I won’t let you call something like that as “light”. What you did just now, its destructive power is too great.」
The sensations of the soft chest and Mitsuki’s warmth were still remaining in my palm and lips. Mitsuki averted her gaze shyly hearing my words.
「……Nii-san you pervert.」
「No, if anything in this case it’s Mitsuki who is—」
「Y-you’re wrong! Nii-san is the perverted one!」
Mitsuki yelled with a bright red face. She separated her ear from my chest and stared at me from very close.
「B-but……if Nii-san will like me even more with this approach……I-I don’t mind doing it once more you know?」
Mitsuki asked me with a serious expression even though her voice was shaking.
I got a flashback of the softness of her chest and the sensation of her kiss. The inside of my head became pure white.
「You said one more time……w-which one do you mean?」
I was losing composure from that unexpected offer and asked such stupid question.
「Either……is fine. Nii-san can choose which one you want to do……or perhaps both……or even something else……」
Mitsuki said that and closed her eyes.
She opened her arms and exposed her chest, while she also lifted up her chin as though looking for a kiss.

「Tsu……」
The sound *thump thump* of my heartbeat was echoing inside my ears. My gaze was coming and going between Mitsuki's lips and her chest that was small but beautifully shaped. Sometimes my gaze also moved toward her white thighs that peeked out from her skirt.
There was no way to choose. I didn't even know if it was really okay to choose. But, I understood that there was no choice of not choosing. Both Mitsuki and I myself were wishing to touch each other more. We wished to ascertain each other's feeling.
This was surely──a method for that.
My body naturally moved when I thought that. My hand reached out and softly touched Mitsuki's cheek. I brought my face closer.
Mitsuki's body twitched. She must have noticed what I was going to do. However she kept her eyelids closed and waited quietly.
──Mitsuki.
I resolved myself and obeyed my feeling by closing the distance.
.
「Student council president-san, there should be a limit even in flirting don't you think?」
.
But Mitsuki and I were shocked by the voice that came from the side and looked over there at the same time.
Before we noticed it the door that connected the inside of the bridge to the outside passage was opened and a girl with long black hair──Kili Surt Muspelheim was peeking out.
Kili was approaching with a twitching smile. She spoke with anger seeping out from her whole body.
「It would be troublesome if you run away again, so I let you do as you like for a while but……this is the limit of my patience. What do you mean one more time huh? Be a bit more reserved.」
Kili said that and separated Mitsuki and me.
「Wha……s-since when you were watching……」
Mitsuki asked with a high-pitched voice. Kili answered her sullenly.
「Almost from the start. Good grief──even though you had put us into that much trouble……and yet you are stealing a head start at this kind of time……won't it be better if you add twenty or thirty more pages of the written apology?」
Kili spoke sarcastically.
「Uu…….I-I understand. It's a fact that I'm doing something indecent outside……I'll add the amount of my written apologies.」
The serious Mitsuki accepted Kili's demand with an expression that was a mix of embarrassment and vexation. Kili seemed to feel good from that and smiled. The she put her arms around my neck.
「Hey, Yuu──before spoiling your little sister, shouldn't you give me a reward first? I refuse to work for free.」

Kili said that and brought her face closer.
「O-oi――」
I was flustered, but Kili was holding my neck firmly so I couldn't move.
Seeing that Mitsuki hurriedly moved to pull away Kili from me.
「K-Kili-san, what are you doing!?」
「You're asking me that? I'm just doing the same thing like you, you know? I wonder if you have any right to stop me after flirting that much by yourself.」
「T-that's……」
Mitsuki faltered when Kili prodded her at where it hurt. However Kili's arms let go of me abruptly and she stepped back from me after that.
「Fufu――that's a nice face. I'll let you off with just this much this time. I want reward from Yuu but, I……I'm looking for Yuu because I need to talk. That's why for now I'll prioritize that.」
There Kili erased her smile and stared at me seriously.
「A talk?」
I urged her with my gaze. Kili took a breath and opened her mouth.
「It's about Okaa-sama.」
「――About Vritra?」
Kili nodded at my confirmation.
「Because Tia's binding is taken off, Okaa-sama has regained her power. Of course she will be reliable as ally if we fight together but――now we also can't ignore Okaa-sama's opinion because she has strength. That's why I want to warn you. Yuu, don't get influenced by Okaa-sama's words.」
Kili spoke with a strong tone. I frowned in respond.
「……Are you telling me to not believe Vritra?」
「No, Okaa-sama shouldn't betray us in this situation. What I want to say is that in the end Okaa-sama is acting for the sake of the "world". In the end me, or Yuu, or Iris-chan and others――won't enter her consideration.」
Kili shook her head and continued speaking with loneliness――or resignation somewhere in her expression.
「If you just obediently get on the rail that Okaa-sama laid, we surely will fail to notice the effect it might have to something important for us. That's why Yuu, when you are at a loss you should obey your own heart instead of Okaa-sama. I think perhaps, that will be the correct path "for human".」
This was something unusual for Kili. She was giving me an earnest warning without any ulterior motive behind it.
I was surprised that Kili who kept claiming that she was a dragon until now was saying something like "for human".
「……I understand.」
That was why I stared straight into her eyes and nodded.
I didn't know what kind of premonition Kili had or what she was feeling uneasy about. However I believed that I should properly listen to her words just now and engraved it into my heart.

「I’m counting on you, Yuu. Then it will be time soon, let’s go to the bridge. Ah, I’ll keep what I saw here a secret, so don’t worry.」
Kili sent an implying smile at Mitsuki before heading toward the door that connected to inside the bridge.
I followed behind Kili together with the red faced Mitsuki.
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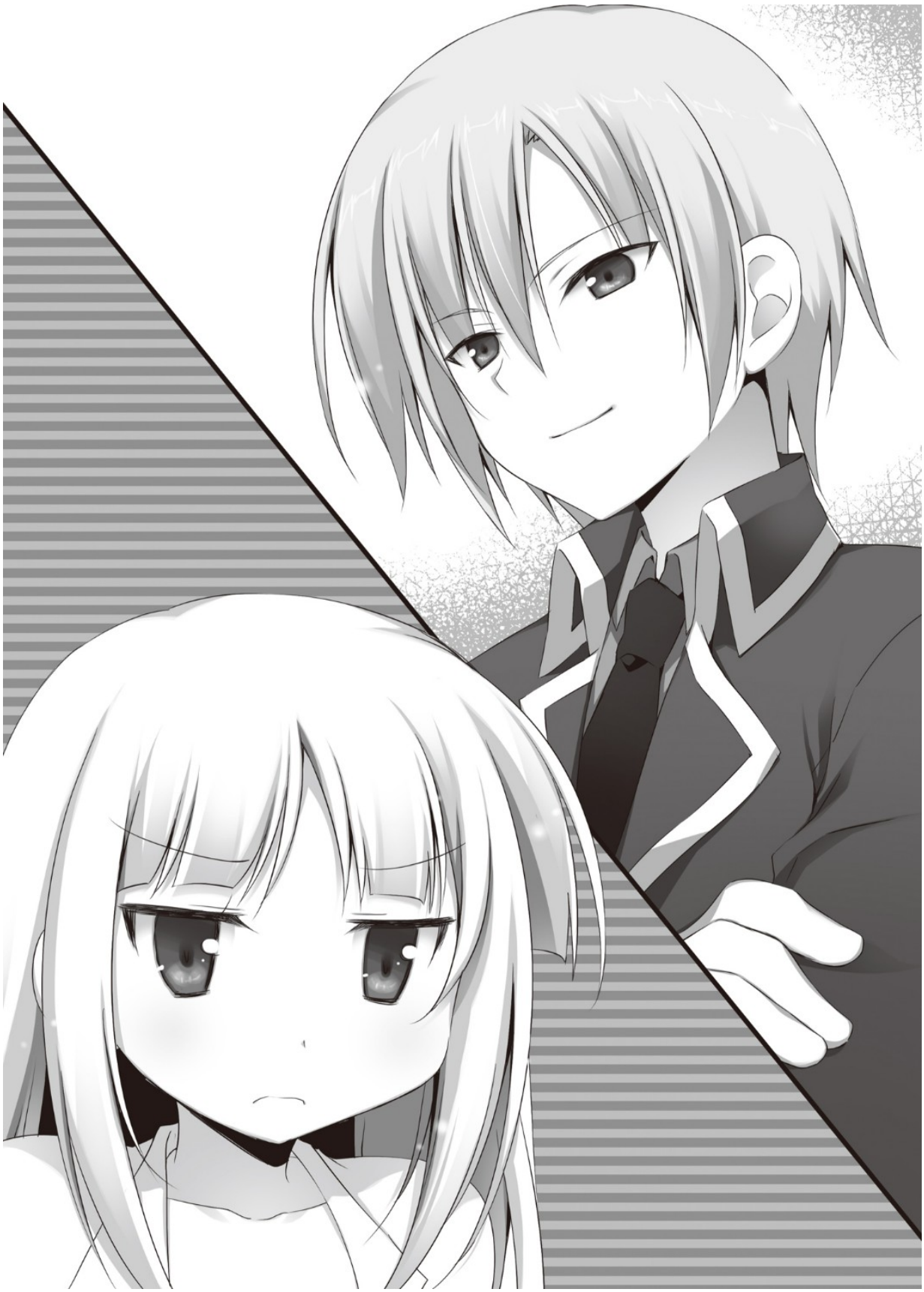
Part 4

"Ooh, my friend! And all of you lovely ladies! How magnificent it is that all of you are safe and sound! Good grief……that NIFL bunch won't give me any information at all, so I couldn't sleep at night with worry."
A high-spirited voice echoed inside Naglfar's bridge.
In the monitor the image of a blonde girl clad in white coat—Midgard's headmaster Charlotte B Lord was being projected. Charlotte was leaning forward with a flushed face. Behind her, her secretary Maika-san was standing by.
"—I'm sorry for that, "Grey" Vampire. We also had our hands full over here. Because of that we put any being that is useless in the battle against dragon outside of our mind."
Major Loki Jotunheim who was sitting on the captain seat apologized sarcastically at Charlotte.
"H-how rude can you be calling someone useless like that! Just so you know, I'm making full use of my power and connections to keep the chaos in the world due to the appearance of unknown territories and Bahamut to the minimum!"
Charlotte looked offended and replied back with a rough tone. The two's gazes that were even filled with killing intent clashed.
Charlotte and Major Loki were like cats and dogs—no, their relationship could even be called as bitter enemy, so it couldn't be helped that they couldn't get along with each other.



But at this rate the atmosphere would become even more volatile and we wouldn't be able to get into the main topic, so I interrupted their conversation.
「So you have worked really hard Char──thank you. Even though we have only separated for several days……I feel like I'm really missing you a lot.」
Charlotte looked toward me after I said that and smiled brightly.
「Fufu, no need for gratitude. I only did what I should do. It's nothing significant at all compared to everyone's effort over there. Only a little time has passed but……I can't recognize you anymore. You must have overcome a great hardship.」
She narrowed her eyes and looked around at me and everyone around me. Iris, Mitsuki, Tia, Lisa, Firill, Ariella, Ren, Kili, Vritra, Jeanne, Shinomiya-sensei──everyone except Shion was gathered here.
Vritra stepped forward from among them and opened her mouth.
「That should be enough greeting. The time left for us is limited. In order to find a way to destroy Angolmois, first I wish to share──about the true identity of Neun's authority.」
Then Tia also hurriedly stood beside Vritra and raised her voice.
「Umm, Tia has also learned a lot of things, so Tia will also join this talk!」
Vritra nodded slightly to that.
「Certainly──what I have is a mere speculation. If there is a mistake in it, correction from the successor of Yggdrasil who possess definite information will be needed.」
Vritra said that and looked around at us.
Major Loki narrowed his eyes slightly but he didn't object at all. Everyone else also waited for Vritra's words quietly.
──In the end Vritra was acting solely for the "world", huh.
「Got it. Then tell us.」
I recalled Kili's "warning" while urging Vritra to continue. Vritra then began to talk with a stiff expression.
「Then first, let me make a confirmation about the origin of Neun's authority. The girl who became Angolmois's core said this. That it was the power possessed by the Seventh Dragon, "Shamash".」
She turned a gaze at me that asked if there was any mistake about it. I nodded back at her.
By Angolmois's core, she meant Shinomiya Miyako. She entrusted a lot of information to us in order to give us a chance to win.
After I affirmed it, Vritra took a breath and continued speaking.
「Seventh Dragon……Apocalypse resisted End Matter's erosion using "Shamash", but it finally reached its limit and got swallowed by

darkness—it transformed into calamity itself and descended to Gaia. And then it swallowed all lives and vanished somewhere……this is our perception about this until now.」
That's right, even Vritra and Tia only knew that much. If Shinomiya Miyako didn't tell us, we would still be in a standstill at that stage.
「However according to the information that we obtained this time, it comes to light that Angolmois's objective is to absorb all lives in Gaia and be reborn as a new life—」
Vritra mentioned the information that was obtained from Shinomiya Miyako.
Shinomiya Miyako who became Angolmois's core said that she had the authority to remake earth into an environment that suited her. In other words Shinomiya Miyako could become the god of the new world.
But Shinomiya Miyako herself didn't wish for that.
What she wished for was only Mitsuki's happiness—.
「Then, what happened to Apocalypse……it's easy to imagine. Yes—what Apocalypse did was the same act of barbarity like what Angolmois is trying to do right now. It devoured Gaia and obtained a new life.」
When Vritra said that, Tia who was listening to her silently nodded her head.
「Tia felt it's strange why Neun's authority wasn't created when Apocalypse came, but Tia finally understand the reason. Because Apocalypse was the owner of the authority……at that time there was nothing that could be done about it.」
Vritra looked around at us with a sharp gaze after hearing that.
「And then what's important is what happened after that. If my conjecture is right, this planet—Gaia and the past me didn't give up resisting by any means.」
Vritra said that with her head held high. There was happiness and pride mixed somewhere in her tone.
Before this, she once acted like she couldn't accept the action that her past self chose. That must be why her spirit was uplifted after understanding that part of the reason.
「Most likely Gaia intentionally granted life to Apocalypse in order to resist the even greater mass of End Matter……Angolmois that would arrive later on, and made it a part of this world.」
「A part, of the world……?」
I couldn't fully understand what she said and frowned.
「Yeah, just like how Gaia incorporated human that was an alien species into its ecosystem, you can also think of this as Apocalypse getting fused into this world too.」
「Then the reincarnated Apocalypse……is existing somewhere in this world?」
I somehow digested Vritra's words and asked that.
Then Vritra got a somewhat distant look and silently shook her head.

「There is no meaning in giving Neun's authority to human if Apocalypse is currently existing. Most likely Apocalypse is mixed in even more widespread fashion……it's mixed with the world itself. No, perhaps I should say that it's intentionally getting mixed into the world. The power of creation using Dark Matter……this seventh authority was surely used to subjugate the seventh calamity.」
Vritra formed a small Dark Matter on her palm and laughed.
「……What do you mean? Didn't you say that Apocalypse was given life?」
I asked for explanation at Vritra who was saying something incomprehensible.
「Yeah, but it was undoubtedly not allowed to be reborn as "individual".」
「Individual――」
Now that she said it, it was certainly strange.
If Apocalypse had devoured the world and be reborn, it should become the god of the new world.
However we were told that the world was restored to "like before" by Vritra when she possessed her complete power.
「……From what you said just now, it sounds like Apocalypse only got its power taken away.」
Vritra's small hand crushed the Dark Matter and her lips twisted at my muttering.
「Exactly! What my predecessor――the omniscient and omnipotent god called Uroboros accomplished in the past was none other than such feat. We can conclude that when Uroboros restored the world using Dark Matter, she "mixed" Apocalypse that was trying to reincarnate. As a mere remnant I can only imagine what happened at that time but……a lot of things suddenly make sense if we assume that was what happened.」
In order to oppose the Seventh Dragon Apocalypse, Vritra was given the authority of Dark Matter creation as the Counter Dragon of that time.
However I was told before this that she must have lost the majority of her power and original self when restoring the world. Now she called her previous self as predecessor and differentiated her with her current self.
Vritra told me that she didn't understand why her predecessor self saved the world by sacrificing herself. Existence of such scale existed in her past and at the present time, that was why she also didn't know anything about Apocalypse.
「Mixing in that when restoring the world……」
The scale was too big that my understanding couldn't catch up.
However Kili stepped forward and spoke at that timing.
「In other words, does that mean Apocalypse is also mixed inside us?」
Vritra replied affirmatively to that question.
「Yeah, exactly. Consequently all of thee can use "Shamash". Neun's authority is the output device to manifest that using Apocalypse's factor as fuel. Due to that――」
Vritra turned her gaze to Iris then.

「……Vritra-chan?」
Iris tilted her head with a puzzled look. Vritra watched her while saying.
「This person must have greater amount of Apocalypse's factor mixed inside herself than other people. That's why when swallowed by End Matter, she was able to become the "light source". However at the same time that also means that when all of thee are using "Shamash", thou draw out a lot of power from this person. Then it's inevitable that she will become the first person to "run dry".」
「Run dry?」
Iris asked back in surprise.
「There is no such thing like infinite or inexhaustible power. The demise won't come if such thing exist. Just like how even Dark Matter is limited, it's only natural that even "Shamash" has a bottom line. And then what happen when that bottom line is crossed? Thou can see the result from what happened to the past Apocalypse.」
Vritra paused for a moment there. Tense silence filled the bridge. Color of understanding was gradually filling everyone's face.
I also arrived at that answer and my body trembled.
Vritra nodded seeing us like that.
「That's right. Something that come to an end—will change to End Matter. No, things that completely burn out won't even leave behind any remains……it might return to nothingness. Iris Freya just now was in the verge of going through that.」
Everyone's expression froze at what Vritra pointed out. I also forgot to breathe for a moment.
I imagined Iris turning into the black End Matter and vanished—.
「Eh……I, almost died?」
The one who received the biggest shock was Iris herself. She checked her own body in disbelief.
「Indeed, if I didn't supply thee with my Dark Matter—that would be thy fate.」
「Vritra-chan gave me Dark Matter……?」
Vritra nodded slightly at Iris's words.
「The only way to keep away the end at the distance is to take away the power to live from other people—just like how Angolmois is trying to devour Gaia's life to reincarnate. In that regard, Dark Matter that contains every possibility is the source of life, the very future of the planet. It can be said as the most effective medicine to stop the progress of demise.」
「So that happened……thank you Vritra-chan!」
Iris thanked Vritra and tried to hug her, but Vritra lightly stooped down and slipped through Iris's arms.
「It's too early for thee to thank me. I saved though because thou are a necessary existence to completely solidify Angolmois. But—there won't be the second time. I won't save thee even if you fall into the same state once more.」

「Ee――」
Iris gulped. Firill cut in at that moment.
「We can just take Vritra's place to supply her with Dark Matter if she isn't going to do it isn't it?」
However Vritra scoffed at those words.
「Foolish. How much Dark Matter do thou think I spent before this for that? Even the total amount of Dark Matter that "D" has consumed until now can't possibly compare. I used Dark Matter in the amount that shorten even this planet lifespan. All of thee won't be able to stop the progress of demise no matter how much Dark Matter thou supply.」
Ariella let out a hoarse voice hearing that.
「Even more than the total amount of Dark Matter that all of us has used up until now……that sounds like a joke……」
Vritra heard Ariella's mutter and sighed deeply.
「It's not a joke. That's just how immense the energy that is required in order to resurrect something that is about to end. After all it's an act that is going against destiny.」
The dumbfounded Iris returned to her senses at that moment and opened her mouth.
「W-wait Vritra-chan! Is it true that the planet's lifespan is shortened for saving me?」
「It's true. Dark Matter is the planet's future. If it's run out, the world will also meet its demise. Producing Dark Matter like this is no different than getting an advance from the future.」
Vritra divulged the information of Dark Matter's true identity, or perhaps it should be called its essence instead. She formed a lump of Dark Matter above her palm once more.
We who had been using Dark Matter until now like it was nothing reflexively looked at each other.
「Each time we formed Dark Matter……the planet's lifespan is shortened, how can that――」
Mitsuki hugged herself without being able to hide her bewilderment. But Vritra shrugged slightly and shook her head.
「Hmph, be at peace. A conversion to inorganic object will leave almost no lasting effect to the remaining amount of Dark Matter. What can consume the "future and possibility" is when thy use Dark Matter to increase life――therefore I put on a limited to all of thee "D" so that thy are unable to perform biological conversion.」
「……Nnu, I thought that we can't perform biological conversion is because our brain's processing ability is insufficient.」
Ren put her hand over her mouth and let out her voice in surprise. Kili also folded her hands and glared at Vritra with a bit of displeasure.
「That's also the first time I'm hearing about this. I wonder if my ability to perform biological conversion isn't because my superior brain……but simply because I don't have that limiter.」

「Exactly. My daughter, thy are nothing more than an individual without such limiter incorporated. Thy are not an existence that is superior than human by any means.」
Kili fell silent after that. After a while she muttered 「I see──just as I thought.」.
The conversation was cut off. The bridge was filled with a slightly awkward silence.
Major Loki who had been keeping quiet all this time looked around at us and opened his mouth.
「That's an interesting conversation but──we are slightly diverting from the main topic. I wish to sort out all these new information and make clear of our plan going forward. Correct me if there is any mistake in what I'll say.」
He said those words as the preface and began to talk dispassionately.The machine intelligence Atla who was flying around inside the monitor puffed out her chest saying 「Listen carefully to what master is saying!」.
「──Currently, Angolmois 's movement is sealed by a cube of great mass. However End Matter is still leaking out from that body, eroding the cube, and continuously spreading to the surrounding. We haven't discovered a method to destroy Angolmois's main body, but dealing with the spreading End Matter can be said as our urgent business.」
Major Loki turned his gaze at Iris then.
「The blue light that all of you have……Neun's authority, it has been proven that can be used to solidify End Matter. Therefore we can only rely on you all, but running out of that power will directly lead to death. The burden on Iris Freya is especially great and Vritra said that she can't treat her any further than this……」
Major Loki talked with a tone that contained implication. I frowned at him.
「What do you want to say?」
「What I want to confirm is just one thing. Second Lieutenant Mononobe. Even knowing that the life of your comrades and your own might be lost, do you still have the resolve to fight using that light──that is my question.」
Major Loki narrowed his eyes testingly, evaluatingly, and waited for our answer.
Cold sweat trickled down my cheek. Major Loki would continue cooperating with us if I told him that we had the resolve. However if even one of us refused to use the authority, the amount of light would become insufficient. Most likely it would be impossible for us to push back the Dark Matter in that case.
In that case, Major Loki would start thinking about other way to save the world. If there was no other choice, he might change direction to use a method to force us to use Neun's authority no matter what.
After all he was the man who was "mankind's hero".
「……」
Major Loki and I glared at each other without me giving any answer.

Now that I knew there was a danger to Iris's life, I couldn't lightly say that we would use our authority. Everyone else also seemed to be concerned for Iris.
Iris seemed to sense that atmosphere and looked around restlessly at us. She then clenched her fist tightly before opening her mouth.
「Um, I――」
But Kili raised her voice loudly to interrupt her.
「Wait a second! In the first place the prerequisite is strange!」
「Eh……Kili-chan?」
Iris looked toward Kili with a surprised face.
Kili looked at such Iris with irritation before turning a sharp gaze at Vritra.
「Why is it that Iris-chan and us have to be the one to shoulder the risk! There won't be any problem if Okaa-sama supply us with Dark Matter! The planet's lifespan doesn't matter! We only have the present……either way it will be the end if End Matter swallow the world so……it should be fine that us who fight while risking our life is compensated isn't it!?」
Kili threw that yell that was filled with indignation at Vritra, but Vritra's expression didn't change.
「I can't do that. Reversal of the demise will consume Dark Matter at tremendous rate. If I do the same thing, the lifespan of the planet might be used up right away. In other words our defeat will be almost set in stone the moment Neun's authority run dry once more. We don't have any choice anymore.」
「Tsu……even so――」
Kili still tried to argue even after hearing Vritra's answer, but no word came out.
A heavy silence fell into the bridge. Charlotte's sigh echoed at that timing.
「……How vexing. I have no words to give to my friend and the maidens. Hero's son, this isn't something that can be concluded immediately. They need time to think. I too wish to investigate whether there is something that I can possibly do.」
Major Loki crossed his legs after hearing Charlotte's words and relaxed his shoulders.
「――It can't be helped. Let's take a break for now. Either way dealing with End Matter is something that only all of you can do. Therefore I shall think of the aftermath of that.」
He looked around at Iris and others as though to give them a reminder before his gaze stopped on me.
「Second lieutenant Mononobe, I wish to talk with you for a bit. Come to the deck at 5 PM.」
「――Got it.」
I unconsciously raised my guard wondering what kind of business he had with me.

There was around thirty minutes until it was five o’clock. Although I was curious about Major Loki’s business with me, what I should do right no was—.
I looked at Iris who got out of the bridge alone with a fast pace and hurriedly followed behind her.

Chapter 2 – The Clear Dragon at Battle Again

Part 1

「Wait……where is she?」
Even though I was following right behind her, I couldn't find Iris's figure at the passage outside the bridge.
First I checked whether she was at the deck, and then I tried going to the cabin that Iris was using together with Kili and others.
「──Iris, you there?」
I tried knocking but there was no reply. I tried peeking inside but it was completely empty.
Well, it could be said as natural perhaps. She quickly got out of the bridge because it must be painful for her to have everyone concerned for her.
There was no doubt that she wouldn't be able to feel calm inside the cabin where someone would definitely return.
But Iris couldn't fly, so she should be inside Naglfar without a doubt. If she wanted to be alone, perhaps I had no choice but search for her everywhere──.
I suddenly got an idea and headed to my cabin.
And then I quietly opened the door while praying.
「────」
Surprise and relive welled up inside me.
Iris was sitting on my bed. From the side her face looked gloomy and depressed, but she made a smile when she noticed me.
「Mononobe, sorry……I'm intruding here.」
「No──nice timing, I was looking for you Iris.」
She must be wanting to talk with me because she was here.
I was relieved about that and also felt slightly happy. I sat down facing Iris.
「Mononobe, do you have a business with me?」
「Rather than business……I'm worried because Iris left the bridge in a hurry like that.」
Iris slightly smiled apologetically when I told her that.
「Thank you, Mononobe. I──have something to consult with you, so I'm really happy.」
「……It's about, Neun's authority right?」
"Shamash" was using Apocalypse's factor as light source. Iris's factor was even thicker than the others, so she was like a sun for us──because of that the possibility of her using up her strength the fastest was high.

The result for that would be demise──death. It must be weighing heavily on Iris's shoulders.
「Yep……ah, but you know, what I'm hesitating isn't about using the power──about fighting or not fighting.」
「Eh?」
I was surprised by her unexpected words and stared back into Iris's eyes.
「The world will be swallowed by End Matter if we don't do anything after all, so we can only do what we can do! Isn't that right, Mononobe?」
「Y-yeah……but, then what is it that you want to consult with me……?」
I asked her in confusion, then Iris looked down in grief.
「It's about Kili-chan, and Vritra-chan. They fought because of me.」
「No, that's not Iris's fault──」
I tried to deny her, but Iris shook her head to interrupt me.
「No, Kili-chan just said what I couldn't say in my place. You see, just now I said "we can only do that" but……I'm actually scared……if possible, I want Vritra-chan to save me……」
Iris spewed out her true feeling with trembling hand. I couldn't keep watching her and wrapped her hand with both my hands.
「It's only natural for you to feel like that. You said that Kili spoke in your place──but she also spoke for me. Compared to the vague future of the planet, Iris who is right before me is far more important. I should have known that, and yet……」
I felt frustrated and gritted my teeth.
When Kili said that something like the planet's lifespan didn't matter, I wondered why I myself couldn't say something like that──.
「Surely, it doesn't matter for us.」
「Doesn't matter……what do you mean?」
「About the future. Both Mononobe and me, actually understand just how important the future is aren't we? But our mind……can't really comprehend it fully. That's what I think.」
Iris scratched her cheek shyly and continued talking.
「Say, that's why, I──want to understand. I want to properly picture this future that I don't really understand, and the understand it fully just how important it is! If I do that I think I'll be able to say to everyone that I'm fine with my head held high, and Kili-chan and Vritra-chan will also be able to reconcile with each other!」
Iris leaned forward and explained insistently. Her face approached and our noses almost touched.
However rather than that, I was entranced by Iris's eyes. Her gaze was completely straightforward and clear, staring into my heart right from the front.

「……I, see. It might be good if we can do that.」
I smiled and nodded.
I couldn't take off my mind from the risk that Iris might die no matter what.
But, I couldn't make a gloomy expression in front of iris who was trying to be positive.
「Right!? But, I wonder what should I do to understand about the future? What do you think Mononobe?」
In other words this must be what she wanted to consult with me.
A smile slipped out from me in front of the frowning Iris and I suggested this to her.
「Well, we can only imagine it. I guess there is no other way for that.」
「Imagination huh……uuun, my future……future……as expected Mononobe and I──」
Iris seemed to imagine something and her face was gradually reddening.
I also tried to imagine it. If everything went well and we could return to Midgard, our daily life would start again from there and it should continue to the future.
It was highly possible that everyone and I who became Counter Dragon wouldn't lose our ability even when we became adult.
Therefore it would be hard for us to get out from Midgard. It was the world's rule that "D" couldn't leave Midgard's protection.
Major Loki also knew that we had stopped being normal "D", so it would also be difficult to pretend that we had lost our ability.
Firill said that we just needed to change the international rule itself, but it would surely take time, and we would definitely had limitation placed on us even if we accomplished it.
That was why perhaps our future would be mostly spun at that southern island.
If Vritra didn't act then new "D" would also stop appearing, the Midgard's standing would also change but──if Iris and Mitsuki were there…….
My thought circuit halted after reaching that far.
「Mononobe, your face is red you know?」
「No, you too Iris.」
Iris and I looked at each other and we burst out laughing simultaneously.
「Fufu, as I thought it's difficult……and somehow it's embarrassing. Besides──」
Iris turned her gaze at me looking like she wanted to say something. I nodded at her.
「Yeah, perhaps we won't be able to completely imagine it with just the two of us.」

After all Iris and I wouldn’t be the only one who was in that future.
「You know, Mononobe! I, also want to consult with Mitsuki-chan and others!」
Iris said that and stood up from the bed. I let go of her hand and waved my hand lightly at her.
「Got it. Talk to me again if you are at a loss.」
「Yep, I’m going!」
Iris jokingly saluted at me and then she headed to the cabin’s door briskly.
There I heard a faint sound from outside and frowned.
However Iris opened the door without pause and ran out with a light gait.
—Just now, there was someone outside right?
And yet it was strange that Iris didn’t run into anyone, so I tried going outside the room.
However there was only the faint echo of Iris’s footstep at the corridor.
There wasn’t anybody else.
「……」
But, I felt a strange pressure from above and I looked up.
「……Jeanne, what are you doing?」
I saw a girl in man’s clothing holding her breath at the ceiling. I asked her hesitatingly.
Jeanne was entwining her legs around a thick pipe while covering her mouth with her hands but—her face went bright red when her gaze met mine.
「Hawah……c-captain! T-this is, how should I say it, it’s a part of my training……it’s nothing at all so don’t mind me!」
Jeanne made excuse with a flustered tone. I averted my gaze from her. And then I warned her awkwardly.
「No, even if you’re training, I think it’s bad that you’re dressed like that in a shared space.」
As someone who belonged to the same special unit Sleipnir like me, it was possible for her to hide herself at the ceiling instantly. However there was a big problem with her current state.
「Eh……?」
Jeanne let out a bewildered voice. If possible I wanted her to notice by herself, but it couldn’t be helped. I explained to Jeanne about the situation she was in.
「You see, right now you are hanging upside down. That’s why your clothes are slipping……」
The jacket and shirt that Jeanne was wearing were rolled up and exposed her smooth stomach completely.
It wouldn’t be that big of a deal if it was a little while ago. But right now Jeanne wasn’t wrapping her breasts with bandage. She had been warned that it wasn’t healthy to tightly wrap her breasts like that, so now she wasn’t wrapping her breasts even when dressed in male clothes.

Because of that right now—she wasn't even wearing a bra, so the lower half of her voluptuous twin hills was visible. Or rather, her clothes were pulled thanks to her large breasts.
「Clothes……? A……aah? P-please don't lo—hyah!?」
Jeanne finally noticed her current state and floundered in panic. That made her legs let go of the pipe and she fell upside down.
「Jeanne—guh!?」
I immediately caught Jeanne's body with both hands. The impact and weight ran through my arms, waist, and knees, making me staggered greatly. However I regained my balance using a leg as the axis and somehow stopped myself from falling.
「Whoops……it helps that you are lighter than I thought.」
I let out a relieved sigh. Meanwhile Jeanne who was in princess carry right now was trembling.
「W-w-wha……」
「It's dangerous if you fall upside down even from this height you know? Well, it was me who caused you to panic but……put down some mat the next time you are training on the ceiling.」
I said that jokingly, but Jeanne's face instantly turned red and she began to flounder once more.
「C-captain, I'm sorry! I-I, this is—wait, my clothes is still pulled up—l-let me down, please let me down~!?」
「Wai-, don't struggle like that, I'll put you down.」
I put down Jeanne on the floor in hurry. She immediately turned her back on me and tidied up her appearance.
「U-umm……this is, I have shown something extremely embarrassing just now……-I-I beg you, if captain can please forget my unsightly appearance just now……!」
Jeanne spoke while still turning away from me with her shoulders shaking.
「I don't really mind it but—you weren't actually training right? Do you have business with me?」
Jeanne should be in front of the cabin when Iris was about to exit the room. I didn't know her reason for hiding, but it was only natural to think that she was simply coming to visit me right?
「Eh—aa, captain found me out as expected. As expected from captain.—
Jeanne let out a sigh of resignation and admiration before she continued speaking.
「Actually I have something to talk about with captain but, I heard a voice from inside……I unconsciously listened in……and then—」
「You felt awkward and hid at the ceiling huh.」
Jeanne shrunk into herself and nodded after I completed her sentence for her.
「Yes, my apologies for eavesdropping like that. The matter about the "future" is also something that is on my mind so……I couldn't help but listen.」

There Jeanne mustered her courage and turned around to meet my gaze.
「Captain──umm, in captain's future……that's, a-am I also in there? I'm not a "D", I'm also not Neun──captain's mate. Even now I cannot be any help to captain at all! That's why I have no qualification to stay at captain's side! But, even so I, if possible I want to be together with captain……」
Her words were vigorous at the beginning, but they gradually petered out. And they cut off at the end. Jeanne weakly looked down. I sighed seeing her like that.
「There is no way Jeanne isn't in there right? Things like being a "D" or not, useful or not, they don't matter at all. Jeanne is already a comrade in Brunhilde class──we being together is only natural.」
「Comrade……is it? But──captain feels responsible for imprinting Kili and others and want to take responsibility for that. And yet, Captain and I don't have that kind of strong connection……」
Jeanne kept looking down with a gloomy expression. My hand plopped on her head in respond and I rustled her hair a bit strongly. Just like when we were superior and subordinate in the past.
「What are you saying. If you're talking about responsibility, then I also feel a really strong one for you Jeanne. After all you betrayed NIFL and Major Loki in order to save me. I won't be able to make it up for you unless I at least look after you for my whole life.」
「W-whole life!?」
Jeanne's voice broke into falsetto. Perhaps I spoke a bit exaggeratingly just now but, it was fact that Jeanne had no other place to belong to other than Midgard now. And so I decided to not correct my words.
「Also, you are also wrong that you aren't of any help for me. You took a share with the linker in Marduk and worked hard right? When we challenge Angolmois for the final battle, I plan to borrow Dark Matter from Vritra to construct Marduk. I'll count on you again at that time. Let's save Shion together.」
Shion wouldn't wake up unless we did something about Angolmois. That was why we absolutely had to accomplish this.
「Tsu……y-yes! Roger than captain!」
Jeanne straightened her posture and saluted. I smiled wryly at her.
「Just now isn't an order. It's my request to you as a comrade. Besides──if Apocalypse is mixed into us, that means there is also "light source" inside you Jeanne. Even though you don't have Neun's authority, you are still fighting together with us.」
「Inside me Apocalypse is also……」
Jeanne's eyes widened and she put her hand on her chest. And then she gasped in surprise and leaned forward toward me.
「Captain! I……might have hit on something amazing.」
「Something amazing?」
I looked back at the excited Jeanne. She nodded vigorously at me.

「Yes――but it might be just my misunderstanding, and I don't even know whether it's possible to be implemented so……for now I'll go talk to Midgard's headmaster.」
「Is it something that involved Char?」
I didn't know what Jeanne was going to do and frowned.
「This might be something that I can only discuss with her who claim to be the king of mankind. Then I'll quickly go to the bridge!」
「Y-yeah.」
I was overwhelmed by her momentum while nodding. However she stopped after taking three steps and turned around toward me.
「Captain――after this, you are going to have a talk with Major Loki aren't you?」
「Well yeah. You heard it yourself, he called me to come to the deck.」
Jeanne stared fixedly at me when I said that. She then opened her mouth with hesitation.
「……Perhaps it's too impertinent for me to say this but, captain……please be careful. Major Loki before this, how should I say it……he felt a bit scary.」
Jeanne urged me to be careful with some vague words.
「Is that so? But you know, Major Loki is always scary most of the time.」
I didn't really feel any abnormality at that time so I was greatly bewildered.
「Yes……that's, true that he is always scary but……I don't know how to describe it, like there was eeriness that Major Loki was holding back before this……」
Jeanne's words were vague and hard to understand but, I couldn't ignore her instinct.
「――Got it. I didn't intend to let my guard down from the start but, I'll be even more careful if you say that.」
「Thank you very much……captain. Later!」
Jeanne sighed in relief and walked toward the bridge with a fast pace.
I took out my phone and checked the time. It should be the right time to head to the deck now.
I slapped my cheeks with my hands to switch my feeling, calmed my breathing, and started walking through the narrow corridor.
.

Part 2

I pushed open the heavy door. The setting sun was coloring the surrounding orange.
The warm sea breeze was accompanied with the lowly humming engine sound. At the deck that was illuminated by the evening sun, there was Major Loki with black and long shadow stretching behind him.
He was staring toward Naglfar's bow as though to ascertain the ship's direction. When I saw his back, I realized that Jeanne's worry was right on the mark.
「Hey, Second Lieutenant Mononobe. You are right on time.」
Major Loki slowly turned around and spoke with his usual composed tone.
I became unable to approach him any closer with just that sentence.
My instinct was insisting to me. Don't get closer carelessly. Loki Jotunheim was already combat ready──.
I didn't feel anything like fighting spirit at the slightest from the smiling Major Loki. He also didn't bring any weapon. He wasn't even in a fighting stance.
Even so, I believed in my instinct and faced him with all my nerves focused on him.
「Major Loki, what is your business with me?」
I was careful to not let any tension into my voice while asking him.
For some reason──I recalled when I bumped on Major Loki at the school festival in Midgard. I let my guard down at that time and got restrained by Major Loki in an instant.
「About Code Lost, there is one thing that I want to confirm. I want you to cooperate with me for that Second Lieutenant Mononobe.」
Major Loki stared fixedly at me while speaking of his business.
「Cooperation, is it……I don't mind if it's something that I can do but──Code Lost doesn't work on Angolmois right now you know?」
I felt my bad premonition growing while checking whether this was something that we should talk about right now.
「Yeah, I know. Code Lost──your "Fafnir" is powerless in front of Angolmois that doesn't have humanoid form. You don't even need to tell me that. After all I had spent half of my life researching Code Lost.」
Major Loki wryly smiled with coldness in his eyes.
Aa─these eyes.

The gaze felt like I was stabbed with a chilling killing intent. I had feared it all this time. That hadn’t changed even now that I had won against him once.
In the first place Major Loki made use of Code Lost only when we fought in Midgard. Before that he didn’t have any special power at all.
And yet, my body froze when I stood at his presence like this. My heart was shriveling when I was stared by him.
I couldn’t imagine at the slightest how to win against him in battle training.
Major Loki’s “strength” was—what I feared from him wasn’t something like ability but a more different strength.
It was the extremely great something that he had accumulated and polished for his whole life.
However I mustn’t be paralyzed. Because I wasn’t his subordinate anymore, I also wasn’t his pawn that existed only to be used by him, but Mononobe Yuu of Brunhilde class.
「Then why—」
When I met his gaze and asked him the reason, Major Loki interrupted me.
「Second Lieutenant Mononobe, do you remember? That time when you killed me.」
「Tsu……what are you suddenly……」
Major Loki paid no mind to my bewilderment and continued speaking.
「I remember it clearly. Your arm that was enveloped in golden light stabbed my torso. That moment—that pain—I remember every detail.」
He said that while his hand touched a spot slightly below his chest.
That moment had also been burned clearly into my brain. My arm that entered the torso without any resistance at all—the heat of the flowing out blood…….
「Yes, I remember. I—dealt a fatal damage to Major Loki. But, Kili healed that wound with biological conversion……」
「That’s right. I was revived by Kili Surt Muspelheim. But, don’t you think it’s strange?」
Major Loki nodded even while he was asking me a testing question.
「Strange?」
However I didn’t know what Major Loki was considering as problem from that. He sighed with a slight disappointment hearing that.
「……You are the one who inherited the Code Lost that I gathered and become the true Clear Dragon—the “Colorless” Fafnir. It’s sad to see you in such state. If you have the pride as the absolute killer, you should harbor the same doubt as me……of how I could be revived simply from having my wound healed.」
「Eh……?」
A chill ran through my back. My head still couldn’t comprehend, but a possibility that I had never even thought about was filling me with the premonition of what laid ahead from there.

「Code Lost is something that make use of the common trait that is human to perform quantum interference and determine absolute death──this is the most plausible hypothesis that we arrived at after going through many years of research and experiment. You can even call it a power to control fate and causality.」
「I had also heard about that, before……」
It was a complicated topic and it was hard to say that I understood it, but right now I was able to instinctually comprehend it because I once obtained that power in the complete form.
「I read the report from Colonel Shinomiya. It seems that you have “killed” End Matter that took on a human form. From there it can be said that my hypothesis has been proved. Something like completely killing something that has already ended and erasing it, there is no way such thing is possible unless it’s done using interference to causality. But……if that’s the case then why am I still alive?」
Major Loki repeated the same question like before. However the weight that was pressuring me this time was different.
「That’s……」
I couldn’t answer. Now even I thought of it as unnatural.
Fafnir’s fang dealt lethal damage not to the target’s body, but to fate itself. In fact Major Loki executed Hreidmar without even touching him──but just by imagining it.
In other words it could be said that simply healing the flesh wound would be meaningless. And yet Major Loki was truly revived──.
「I have already made several hypothesizes regarding this matter. However none of them can be proved conclusively. Therefore I’m thinking to ascertain it now. The reason why you couldn’t kill me──」
He moved smoothly.
Major Loki put his hand into his chest pocket with a thin smile on his face──and took out a mass of metal that had black luster.
It was an old type revolver that was more of an antique.
He aimed the muzzle at me without any hesitation and pulled the trigger.
「Tsu──!?」
Even though I had imagined the possibility, resolved myself, and on my guard, I couldn’t move with my mind. My thinking wouldn’t make it in time.
What pushed my body into action was animalistic instinct.
Gunshot resounded at the same time when I jumped to the side. Bullet grazed my left cheek.
I would have died if I didn’t dodge. However I had no time to protest. Major Loki slid the gun muzzle to match my movement.
I could see his finger pressing the trigger in slow motion.
My delayed mind accelerated and I my mind finally caught up with the present situation.
However it wasn’t enough. Faster──.
──Anti material armor, Damascus 09P!

I formed Dark Matter ahead of my gaze. I transformed it into an armoring board with diameter of 5 centimeter.
GIIINN!!
A high pitched metallic sound echoed. The bullet that Major Loki fired was deflected by my barrier.
I felt “Fafnir” inside me was awakening.
Now that I had been told about how Code Lost worked, I could also make conjecture about the origin of this foresight that was like a future sight.
Most likely this foresight wasn’t prediction. It was closer to being determining the causality.
The bullet hit the board because such causality was drawn to happen.
Before, Major Loki who obtained Code Lost destroyed unmanned weapon without even touching it by making use of the process of killing human.
What I was doing might be the same with that.
By determining the causality that Major Loki would be killed at the end of this fight, I was controlling the process in between.
But—.
The succession of gunshot and the echoing metallic sound.
I completely blocked all the six bullets loaded in the revolver and formed Dark Matter on my hand.
Anti personal weapon—AT Nergal.
What I created from material conversion was a gun type stun gun. It was a weapon to subdue the opponent without killing them.
I couldn’t possibly kill Major Loki. There was no reason to kill him.
Therefore I fought back using nonlethal weapon.
「Fu—」
Major Loki smiled slightly and dodged Nergal’s attack with the minimum movement.
I knew. My objective wasn’t to kill him, so my shot didn’t receive accuracy correction from causality interference.
However by switching into offense, I finally obtained the leeway to say something.
「Major Loki, why are you—」
「I already told you the reason. This is a necessary process to ascertain what lies in the deepest part of Code Lost. Although……I can’t claim that there is no personal feeling influencing me.」
Major Loki casually dodged my attack while reloading his revolver.
「Personal feeling……?」
I also reloaded Nergal’s bullet with material conversion and asked him back.
「I wanted to fight you one more time. To be honest I’m a sore loser. The fact that I’m defeated by you—leave a bad taste in my mouth.」
Major Loki finished reloading his revolver and fired once more.
「Kuh……」

I made up pinpoint defense using barrier creation, but my attack also didn’t hit.
I checked the surrounding while running.
There were multiple gun turrets on Naglfar’s deck. I quickly rolled behind that cover. Bullet hit the base of the gun turret and dull metallic sound rang.
「I’m facing you with all my strength. You too shouldn’t hold back and can use your dragon authority. Just like the other day when you killed me.」
Major Loki spoke from the other side of the gun turret.
Hearing that, I realized that certainly I could only do that in this situation.
I understood from fighting like this. I was far below Major Loki when it came to simple combat technique.
I would lose if I fought him normally. If I fixed “death” using Code Lost, I might be able to obtain victory through the process but—it would be completely meaningless to kill Major Loki here.
Rather doing that would make NIFL and Atla stopped cooperating with me. It would cause hindrance for the coming final battle against Angolmois.
That was why I had to use power other than Code Lost—dragon’s ability that wasn’t Fafnir—.
I put my hand on my left chest and focused my mind.
Residing there was the authority that I succeeded from “Yellow” Hraesvelgr, Ether Wind.
Golden particle began to flutter at the surrounding. I was wrapped in a materialized veil of mind.
This was dragonification that occurred from using Ether Wind in full. I confirmed that my whole body was covered in golden light and slowly walked out from the cover of the gun turret.
Gunshot resounded right at that instant—Major Loki’s bullet hit my forehead.
However there was no pain. There was only a slight sensation of something touching me.
Just like with Hraesvelgr, mind veil that was created by Ether Wind couldn’t be affected by physical attack.
After forehead it was heart—.
Major Loki’s bullet targeted my vital spots accurately, but the golden veil blocked them.
「This is my wind, Major Loki.」
I declared that there was no point in fighting any further.
In the previous battle, Major Loki also lost against me who used Hraesvelgr’s ability. Human had no method to kill a dragon that neutralized physical attack. Therefore even Code Lost couldn’t kill me.
「Victory proclamation should be made after you neutralize the opponent—Second Lieutenant Mononobe.」
However Major Loki didn’t put down his gun and spoke with a fearless smile.

His expression and gaze made a chill ran through my body, but Major Loki shouldn’t be able to do anything, so I started walking.
Major Loki should accept his defeat if I took away his gun.
Thinking that—I approached Major Loki who was repeating his pointless shooting.
「Second Lieutenant Mononobe, can I ask you one thing?」
Reloading, then firing. Major Loki repeated that while asking me.
「……What is it?」
I asked back while feeling discomfort because Major Loki wasn’t showing any panic at all.
Then Major Loki said this with a wry smile that was filled with exasperation.
「You—are thinking that the same method will work twice against this me?」
A freezing chill assaulted my whole body.
My instinct, my body, they were raising alarm bell. But just what was it that I was fearing—.
Even I myself didn’t understand the origin of this feeling of danger, but I noticed the faint low sound coming from behind and turned around.
「I should have said that I’m facing you with all my strength—that it leave a bad taste in my mouth to stay defeated by you. Naturally, I have prepared a method to win.」
The gun turret where I was hiding before this moved and aimed at me.
Normally, gun turret that was installed on ship couldn’t aim at its own deck. However the variable range of that gun turret’s movement was big and could aim at me easily—.
「Wha-……!?」
I gulped. Behind me Major Loki sharply announced.
.
「Prototype Mental Gun Turret Noa Replica—Fire」
.
Light blinked deep inside the cannon barrel. I wouldn’t be able to dodge in time. I immediately crossed my arm in a defensive posture.
An impact came right after that.
My vision was dyed pure white. There was only the scattered golden particle that could be seen at the edge of my field of vision.
After that numbness—and intense pain ran through my whole body.
Pshew Something was severed and the world reversed from white to black.
Inside that only my mind was rolling around.
—Just now was a weapon reproduced from Marduk’s anti dragon weapon……”Noa(Nirvana Penetrating Ark)”…….
That weapon amplified mental strength and fired it as cannon shell.
Certainly that weapon would be able to work even on me who was using Hraesvelgr’s ability.

I should pay more attention to this battleship Nalgfar that was modeled after Marduk and the fact that I was on it. It wouldn’t be strange even if it was loaded with weapon other than Babel replica—.
Even such thought was gradually fading—when I realized I was facing up the burning red sky.
It seemed I fainted, but most likely not much time had passed.
But, Major Loki was standing right beside me who collapsed on the deck. The gun in his hand was pointed at me.
「This is my win, Second Lieutenant Mononobe.」
「Tsu……」
I couldn’t say anything—I couldn’t even move my body. I gritted my teeth. It wasn’t like I had any reason to fight.
If the battle was over with this then that was just I wanted.
However……for some reason it felt extremely vexing. It was so embarrassing and pathetic the way I underestimated my opponent.
Major Loki looked down at me who was in such state and smiled slightly.
「—That’s what I want to say but……it seems that it’s a draw this time.」
Then the gun slipped out of his hand. *Gan* It rolled beside my head with such sound.
「I heard that it exhausted the mind but……to think that it’s to this degree. Was it because of lack of adjustment, or bad amplification ratio……anyway, I don’t have any strength to even pull the trigger.」
Major Loki fell on his knee and sat down beside me after saying that.
「Just what are you doing……」
I felt something like relieve, but also anticlimax—I sighed with a complicated feeling.
「Fu—well, we didn’t try to kill each other so this is how it ends up. I can’t call it a satisfying result but……I accomplished my objective. There is no problem.」
Major Loki laughed with his shoulders slightly shaking. He stared at me who was unable to get up.
「Just what did you learn from the fight just now……」
I frowned doubtfully and asked the meaning of that fight.
Then Major Loki paused for a moment before opening his mouth.
「—Second Lieutenant Mononobe, you are an extremely powerful existence when dragonified. However I’ve proved that it’s possible to defeat you if I can go through the required procedures. But……originally this is impossible.」
「Impossible?」
I sent a questioning gaze at Major Loki who shrugged.
「There is no way human can win against you who possess the majority of Code Lost right? It’s trivial whether you intend to kill me or not in the end. It’s impossible to fight without any killing intent—no matter how much you try to suppress it, Code Lost will interfere with causality.」
「Then, how……」

He continued while looking at the puzzled me.
「There is one conclusion. Code Lost didn't function in the battle just now. It was the same when you killed me last time. If that's the case then my revival can be explained.」
Major Loki sighed with an expression that was somewhat refreshed.
「Wai──please don't get satisfied by yourself. I don't understand your meaning at all here.」
Major Loki gave off an aura as though what he said was already an explanation enough, so I hurriedly protested at him.
「……You are so slow Second Lieutenant Mononobe. The point in common between the previous battle and today's battle is your use of Hraesvelgr's ability, of you turning into dragon. In other it words it can be considered that Code Lost stopped working against human when you temporarily stopped being human.」
Major Loki spoke in annoyance, but I was getting even more confused instead.
「Stopped working against human? But, Code Lost is a power for killing human isn't it?」
「That's right. However do you remember the hypothesis that I mentioned? Code Lost made use of human as point in common to do quantum interfere in limited fashion.」
「Y-yes……」
It was hard to say that I understood the theory, but I recalled him saying that so I nodded.
「In short Code Lost become the "lethal gold" to kill human because human has it. Then if the owner stop being human, what will happen──」
「Ah……」
There I finally understood what Major Loki wanted to say and managed to guess the answer vaguely.
「If the point in common is gone, the quantum interference cannot be carried out. The gold is altered into a harmless junk for human. No…… perhaps I should say that the opponent it can kill is changed. I'm considering that the key to defeat Angolmois lie here.」
「Don't tell me──」
I still hadn't connected our talk right now to Angolmois, but now I held my breath at Major Loki's words.
「Yeah, even though Angolmois doesn't have human form, it's possible to make it a target of Code Lost. If you yourself become an existence of the same kind like Angolmois, the quantum interference will occur and Code Lost will function.」
「Tsu……becoming the same kind of existence? How in the world……」
I instinctually felt resistance to the content of this talk and reflexively replied back before giving it any consideration.
It made me shuddered thinking about becoming the same like that monster that was formed from the skulls of every living being.

「Certainly that might not be easy, but we have all the cards in our hands. If we ask for “Black” Vritra’s cooperation, won’t she be able to change your form with biological conversion? And then with Neun’s authority that can determine shape, I think it will also be possible for you to return to back being human.」
「That’s──」
The logic that Major Loki pointed out made my mind to consider if such thing was actually possible.
However a young voice came from a different direction at that moment.
.
「It’s too bad but, this matter won’t be that easy.」
.
I moved my gaze in surprise and found Vritra sitting on the gun turret that shot me.
Major Loki seemed to have noticed her. He didn’t show any reaction. Or rather, it must be also his objective to let Vritra listened to our conversation till here.
「Vritra……since when──」
She laughed pleasantly at my question.
「I ran away from my annoying daughter and enjoyed my freedom in the sky after so long. And then the battle of both of thee began. I took the pleasure of observing the battle. Thy consideration about Code Lost is also very interesting.」
Vritra said that while jumping down from the gun turret. Normally someone who jumped from that height would get their legs sprained, but her body floated lightly just before the landing and offset the impact. Most likely she formed wind at that timing.
「”Black” Vritra──are you saying that my conjecture is mistaken?」
Major Loki approached and questioned Vritra.
That’s right, she objected at Major Loki’s words just now.
「No, most likely thy conjecture about Code Lost is correct. What I’m objecting is after that──the part of becoming the same kind with Angolmois.」
Vritra erased the smile on her lips and answered with a serious tone.
And then she stared fixedly at me who was lying down on the ground. Her underwear was completely exposed due to the angle, but Vritra showed no sign of concern about that. And the mood also wasn’t right to point that out, so I helplessly averted my gaze.
「Even you Vritra are saying that it’s impossible for me to become the same figure like Angolmois? Is it a problem with something like the remaining amount of Dark Matter……」
I stared at another direction while asking that. Then Vritra straddled my head and glared down at me.
「Don’t underestimate me. I don’t know if it’s about dragging you back from the demise, but it’s more than possible if it’s simply about biological

conversion. Certainly it will reduce the remaining amount of Dark Matter, but it won't be to a degree that affects the planet's lifespan.」
My head was fixed in place by both her legs, so I couldn't even avert my gaze and asked toward her panty.
「Then, what's the problem?」
「Do thy……think that is really Angolmois's true appearance? That "lump" of skulls?」
The panty asked back. I considered the meaning of her words.
「Lump……in other words, there are extra things mixed in it?」
「Indeed, one of the skulls belonged to Bahamut correct? In other words the majority of the bones are "those who ended" that Angolmois absorbed. Even if thy imitate the outer shell that is formed from such things, it can't be said that thou have become the "same kind" like Angolmois.」
The panty declared strongly.
「Then, we're in a stalemate.」
「It's too early to give up. Thou have Neun's authority. The light of defining might be able to illuminate the real body──the corpse of Angolmois itself that is buried within the countless skulls.」
「Tsu……but that means, the burden on Iris will be even greater than before.」
I argued back half reflexively. In respond Vritra sat down on my chest heavily.
The panty finally vanished from my sight and the childish face that looked really similar with Kili stared at me from very close.
「Exactly. However is there any other way?」
「――――」
I couldn't answer. However that wasn't a silence of agreement. I glared back at Vritra with determination.
.
「It looks like it's still too early to form a concrete strategy.」
.
Then Major Loki who was watching quietly sighed and slowly stood up. It seemed that he had recovered to a degree where he could move.
「I showed you that Code Lost is an effective card, but it doesn't mean that we have all the cards now with that. I don't mind to wait for you to consider various possibilities before forming a plan. I shall wait until Naglfar's resupplying is over.」
He said that and picked up the fallen gun before walking away with heavy steps.
「――――Thank you, very much.」
I was almost killed and hurt to a degree where I couldn't stand up, so I was reluctant to say it but……I thanked him at the very least.
Major Loki raised one hand slightly and vanished from my view without even looking back.

Only me who was lying down unable to move and Vritra who was sitting above me were left behind on the deck.
Perhaps because my mental veil was directly damaged, my mind couldn’t command my body well. Feeling was gradually returning to my fingertips, but it seemed that I would still need some time until I could get up.
Vritra was looking down on me coldly. Her expression was giving me a bad premonition.
「Vritra, you’re heavy so get off me.」
Actually she wasn’t that heavy, but I tried telling her that.
Then her eyebrow twitched and she grabbed my collar in irritation.
「My comrade──is Iris Freya’s existence that important for thee? That person isn’t even thy “family” like Mononobe Mitsuki……she is one of thy several “mates”. Her standing isn’t unique. Isn’t she just a replaceable existence?」
Vritra ignored my words and showered me with questions.
Blood rose into my head for an instant, but seeing the pure confusion in Vritra’s eyes, I took a deep breath first.
「……She is absolutely irreplaceable. Iris is Iris. There is only one of her in this whole world──she is……my important person.」
I suppressed my emotion and answered. Then Vritra shook her head in exasperation.
「I can’t understand. I thought that for human who live in colony. Their position with other people is everything for them.」
「There are things that can’t be measured with just position. Iris is the only one who call you “Vritra-chan” right? But Iris doesn’t do that because she is in a special position. She can interact with you like that because Iris is Iris.」
Vritra looked slightly surprised and blinked hearing that.
「Certainly there is nobody who call my name while adding “chan” other than Iris Freya. However……is there any meaning in that?」
「Whether it has any meaning or not……I don’t know. But try imagining it. If Iris who is always that noisy and interact with you without any reservation is suddenly gone──won’t you feel desolate?」
「……」
Vritra didn’t say anything. I felt that there was a possibility for mutual understanding there and added more words.
「As for me, of course I’ll feel desolate if that ever happen. No……it won’t be just a feeling of desolation. I’ll also feel the same for Mitsuki or Lisa or the others──naturally, I’ll also feel the same for you Vritra.」
「……Me too?」
Vritra’s eyes widened in surprise.
「Yeah, I’ll feel desolate if Vritra is gone.」
「Isn’t it because all of thee will be troubled if thou can’t obtain my help?」
Vritra tilted her head and asked. I replied with a wry smile.
「Certainly your ability as “Black” Vritra is really reliable right now. But even if you don’t have that──even if your ability is still sealed──you are

already a member of Brunhilde class Vritra……your existence should have become irreplaceable for Iris and the others too.」
「Thou are saying……that I have more value than my position?」
Vritra showed an expression that couldn't hide her confusion. I strongly nodded back at her.
「That's a complicated way to say it, but that's right. That's why……don't belittle that kind of thing too much.」
I said that with a heartfelt feeling. Vritra closed her mouth and fell silent. And then after a while, she let out a long sigh.
「As I thought──the creature called human is hard to understand.」
Vritra said that with a monotone voice and stood up. This time she looked down at me from an angel where her panty wasn't visible.
「I see……」
I felt disappointed that my words didn't reach her.
「Thou better cool down thy head a little. I'll also do the same.」
Vritra shortly told me that and lightly flew to the sky.
「Ah──」
I saw off her receding figure and her panty that peeked out from her skirt.
──She said that she is going to cool down her head too.
I considered it as proof that my words had also shook her at the inside a little.
Then perhaps this conversation wasn't meaningless.
I harbored such expectation while continuing to look up to the sky of red sunset from the deck until my body could move again.
.

Part 3

Naglfar was anchored at an uninhabited island that NIFL was using for training.
The supply ship still hadn’t arrived. There was no ship other than Naglfar at the port.
The sun set at the horizon at the west. Stars were starting to twinkle at the sky.
I finally could stand up again and leaned on the deck’s railing while staring at the black silhouette of the island.
For some reason it reminded me of the uninhabited island that we visited when subjugating Basilisk. But because there was no large volcano here like that island, we couldn’t hope to find a natural hot spring here.
The night wind was gradually getting colder, so I thought of getting back inside the ship. It was then the phone inside my pocket vibrated.
「Hm……?」
I took out my phone and the screen showed Midgard office. I gasped and pressed the accept button. The phone then showed the face of Charlotte B Lord.
「O? Ooo──the call finally connect. Really that cursed hero’s son……
Naglfar’s information management is really troublesome……he put that irritating limitation in the communication……」
Charlotte smiled, but she immediately switched into complaining mode toward Major Loki.
Maika-san tapped her shoulder from behind.
「Charlotte-sama, Mononobe-sama will be confused if you don’t tell her your business.」
「Y-you’re right. My friend──actually there is one thing that I want to talk about with you.」
Charlotte made a serious expression and cleared her throat before entering the main topic.
「Talk?」
I also straightened my posture because this seemed to be a serious matter.
「Indeed, it’s something about a suggestion that Jeanne Hortensia brought up a little while ago……」
「Now that you mention it, Jeanne said that she has some kind of business with Char.」

I recalled what happened before the battle against Major Loki. Jeanne said that she had something that could only be talked with Char who introduced herself as the king of mankind.
「……That maiden asked me this. Is it possible to use “Grey” vampire’s authority to draw out Apocalypse’s power from humans all over the world?」
「Tsu――」
I held my breath in surprise. To think Jeanne got that kind of idea.
「If this so called Apocalypse’s factor is mixed to this whole world, then certainly all humans can become “light source” for Neun. For human light is their “voice”, so if they can be made to call the names of all of you forcefully using my power, then perhaps even more light can be gathered and the burden on Iris Freya will decrease……」
Charlotte’s face was cloudy even though she was saying that. Even I understood the reason for that.
I recalled the scene of red mist spreading over Midgard.
「But, if Char do something like that――」
「Of course, I can’t――it’s something that mustn’t be done. If I attempt to do something like controlling the whole mankind, my authority will run out of control once more and kill the people’s hearts. Therefore what I can do is relying on my underlings and my position as Midgard’s representative and making as many people as possible to call out everyone’s name. That’s all.」
Charlotte folded her arms and spoke with an apologetic look.
However I shook my head hearing that.
「No, just you going that far……fills me with nothing but gratitude. Even without Char giving out absolute order that control the people, surely there will be many people who lend their ears. After all the threat of Angolmois isn’t just our problem alone.」
「I hope that’s true but……I hesitate to inform the maidens about this. What if this method doesn’t give that much result? It’ll pain me if this only gives them premature joy. And even if it goes well, it still won’t change that the greatest burden is on Iris Freya. And if the worst result still occur in the end……」
Even so Char’s expression didn’t clear up and a heavy sigh slipped out from her small lips.
「So that’s why you want to talk with me first.」
「Yeah. I leave it to you whether you will tell them about this or not――」
「I’ll tell them.」
I smiled and interrupted Char’s words.
「M-my friend, it will be better if you consider it for a bit――」
The anxious Char pressed her face on the camera from the other side. I smiled at her.
「Iris already decided to fight. Both Iris and I aren’t thinking of anything like it’s fine whatever the result is but……we understand that there is no running away from this. That’s why having as many factor that can give up hope as possible will be better.」

「———That maiden, she is far stronger than I expected.」
Char muttered in a daze. I responded to her with a wry smile.
「Understood. I shall believe in you and those maidens. And so believe in me too. I swear that I will send to all of you a dazzling light——”voices” that cheer on all of you without fail.」
Charlotte puffed out her modest chest with her declaration. I nodded.
「You don’t even need to tell me. I believe on my “best friend” right from the start.」
Char’s face blushed when I said that.
「Y-you’re right! This kind of vow is unnecessary with our friendship. Then my friend——I pray for your fortune.」
Charlotte saluted. I also responded back to her with the same and then the communication was cut off.
I put back my personal phone into my pocket and looked up at the night sky that had even more stars now than before.
I could see the path now thanks to Major Loki.
Hope was born now thanks to Charlotte.
I didn’t know whether we had all the cards now or not but, we should fix our plan going forward here for the time being.
The time that was remaining for us was limited.
The more we left Angolmois alone, the more End Matter would spread and the harder it would become to deal with it. The resupply would also finish tonight, so I wanted to start taking action tomorrow morning.
I firmed my heart and walked away from the railing toward the entrance.
My retreat ended here. From here on it was time to move forward even if only a little.
.

Part 4

「—As I said just now, thanks to Char we can now expect Iris's burden to be lightened and for the "light source" to be expanded. If a lot of people respond to Char's call, Neun's light will surely emit a radiance that is many times, dozens of times—or even more than that compared to before.」
Everyone other than Shion gathered in Naglfar's bridge once more.
I talked in front of everyone about what we should do and what we should aim at from here on.
「With that light, first we will push back at the spreading End Matter. And then after that we will illuminate Angolmois's core, the skull that can be said as its true body……its true appearance. There is no guarantee that this phase will go well. If there is no effect from our effort, then I'm thinking that we will destroy its outer shell temporarily before trying to solidify it once more.」
Vritra's whereabouts was unknown before this, but she showed up when I gathered everyone using Naglfar's external broadcasting function.
However she was taking distance from Kili and she also wouldn't meet our gaze. In contrast Kili had been glaring at Vritra the whole time.
Iris was concerned by the two of them and sometimes she would glance at them.
As for Mitsuki and Lisa and others, I couldn't see any agitation and hesitation like before from them. All of them should have talked with Iris, so each of them must have resolved themselves.
「And then if we succeed in identifying Angolmoi's main body, I'll borrow Vritra's power—and take the same form like Angolmois.」
However as expected this statement surprised Mitsuki and others. It caused a stir from them.
「N-Nii-san, you said the same form—what do you mean?」
「I learned something thanks to Major Loki. Code Lost isn't something that only work with human—it seems that it's a power to kill the same kind of existence with the authority's owner. That's why if I become the same kind like Angolmois, it's highly possible that he will become a target for Code Lost.」
I turned my gaze to the bewildered Mitsuki and explained the reason to her.
Then Vritra who should be said as the foundation of this plan continued my words.

「A mechanism of automatic biological conversion has been included in “D” factor from the start. I’m referring to the process of being imprinted and transforming to the same kind. My comrade is also not an exception to this with his status as “D”. Therefore I shall add biological conversion mechanism into him that will activate transformation to the same kind when he come into contact with Angolmois.」
The members of Brunhilde class looked at each other with worried expression when they heard that, but Major Loki nodded in understanding.
「Fumu, the requirement is lax if just touching will be enough. Vritra not needing to come along in the charge toward the main body can also be called a merit. It will be better to have Vritra continuing to restrain the solidified Angolmois like before.」
However everyone else was uneasy as expected. This was also my first time hearing about the concrete plan so I was slightly shaken.
—In other words, I would be imprinted by Angolomois and took his form huh.
I was able to comprehend that I wouldn’t be able to become the “same kind” unless I went that far. But I still had reluctance.
Besides……would I be able to maintain my current consciousness if I became the same thing like Angolmois?
「Yuu—you’re going to become Angolmois?」
Tia asked me worriedly. I was also uneasy like her, but I smiled to reassure her.
「Yeah, but if we have Neun’s authority—if everyone illuminate me, I should be able to return to normal. I’m not trying to become a sacrifice here.」
Of course there was no guarantee that things would go that well.
There was also the possibility of Neun’s authority running out, and if I lost sight of myself, then perhaps I wouldn’t be able to return back to normal even if my name was called.
But, there was no meaning discussing that here.
Everything would end if we failed. No matter how dangerous the path was, there was no way but to advance forward.
Perhaps Tia also understood that, because she bit her lip and didn’t say anything else.
However Ariella raised her hand hesitatingly there.
「Umm……if we can completely solidify Angolmois, there won’t be any need to take that much risk isn’t it? We can seal it by restricting its movement using overwhelming mass after all……」
However I shook my head.
「No, we have to destroy Angolmois no matter what. It’s not for the world’s sake or anything, but for Shion.」
「Aa—」
Ariella gulped and pressed her hand on her forehead.
「……I’m really no good. I can’t see anything but what’s in front of me again.」

Ariella sighed, but Ren shook her head a little beside her.
「Onee-chan isn't bad. Onee-chan is simply worried and in love with Onii-chan.」
「W-wait Ren!」
Firill who was watching the panicking Ariella opened her mouth with an expression that was exuding determination.
「That Angolmois is Miyako……and also Shion. That's why we have to liberate the two of them from that pitch black darkness.」
Lisa agreed with Firill's words.
「Yes, exactly. After all that is Miyako-san's wish. Isn't that right—Mitsuki-san?」
Mitsuki who was addressed nodded deeply and strongly.
「—Yes.」
And then everyone's gaze gathered on me once more.
I looked around fully at the bridge and confirmed that there was no other question, then I told them the plan going forward.
「It seems that Naglfar's resupply and maintenance is planned to finish at six o'clock tomorrow morning. That's why the mission will start at seven o'clock tomorrow morning—we will depart from this island after we reconstruct Marduk with Vritra's help.」
I turned my gaze to Major Loki to see if he had any problem with it. He responded with a smile and a small nod.
Everyone else also tensed their expression and nodded.
However Iris who hadn't said anything until now raised her voice at that timing.
「Mononobee, we won't have anything particular to do until then?」
「Yeah, that's right—」
「In that case, seeing that this battle is going to be really, really important……before such really difficult battle, there is something that I want to do first!」
Iris looked around at us after saying that and spread her arms wide open.
「Something that you want to do?」
I raised my guard thinking of what kind important matter it would be, but Iris told this with a nonchalant smile.
「You see—let's play with everyone right now!」
Iris's excited voice echoed inside the bridge that was filled with tense atmosphere—.

Chapter 3 – The Previous Night’s Game Party

Part 1

「Muu……even though I said everyone――」
Iris looked around at the members who gathered in my cabin and puffed up her cheeks in discontent.
Everyone had just taken shower to washed off their sweat, so nice scents of shampoo were drifting inside the room.
「No, as expected it's impossible to get everyone here. It's unreasonable.」
I said so without hiding my exasperation.
Naturally Major Loki wasn't here. He declined Iris's invitation because he had to take care the procedure with the supply ship and contact NIFL headquarters.
――Or rather, would he come here even if he had no work to do?
I pressed my head with my hands because I couldn't picture the scene of Major Loki playing with us at all.
We created what was readily available in the cafeteria inside the ship for dinner and I also brought some of it to the bridge, but Major Loki looked busy as usual there.
「Major Loki has work to do, and Shinomiya-sensei is looking after Shion for us. The room is also full already, so I think this is enough.」
I looked over the members of Brunhilde class who gathered inside the room. Iris, Mitsuki, Tia, Lisa, Firll, Ariella, Ren, Jeanne, and then me. The nine of us were crammed into a cabin for four people, so there was no more leeway with the space. Everyone was sitting on the lower part of the two bunk beds or on the floor.
「You're right, but――」
However Iris was still staring inside the room with reluctance. I knew that she was thinking about the two people who weren't here.
「It can't be helped about Kili and Vritra. Those two didn't look like they are in the mood for game.」
Yes, only the two of them refused Iris's invitation with personal reason.
「……Even though I told Kili-chan that I'm fine. I wish she can reconcile and play together with Vritra-chan.」
Iris's shoulders slumped in disappointment. It seemed that Iris had also talked with Kili.
However if she still acted like that even after that, then perhaps the problem was even more serious than I thought. Most likely the cause of the problem wasn't solely Iris.

「It will be fine. If we have fun playing here, then they will be the one who come here on their own before long. Regardless of what those two said from their mouth, I believe that they're actually someone who get lonely easily at heart.」
Lisa patted Iris's shoulder and cheered her up. Firill grinned hearing that.
「Aa──I once read in a book that there is that kind of myth in Japan. If I'm not mistaken, it's about a god who hid inside a cave and got lured out because of people having fun outside?」
Firill turned to Mitsuki for confirmation.
「Yes, that's the story of Amaterasu's hiding. Certainly this might be a similar circumstance.」
Mitsuki nodded with a wry smile.
「But you know──is it really okay for us to play around in this kind of sitaution? I feel like……there might be other important preparation that we should do. I can't really calm down.」
Ariella who had Ren sitting on her lap was looking around at us restlessly.
「Nn, I also understand, Onee-chan's feeling. But in reality──there isn't really anything, that we can do right now. If forced to say……then something like health management?」(TN: Health in Japan is taichou, but taichou can also mean captain.)
Ren kicked her legs back and forth while tilting her small head.
Charlotte was doing the preparation for reducing Iris's burden, while Major Loki was the one laying out the preparation so that the mission tomorrow could be carried out smoothly. It was just as Ren said──our role was to sleep soundly and maintained our condition so we could challenge Angolmois in perfect state.
However Jeanne raised a shrill voice there.
「Eeh!? M-managing the captain!? Certainly captain is the linchpin of the mission but, what kind of management we are talking about here……d-don't tell me it's that……」
She was abnormally panicked and her face was gradually reddening. Tia made a retort at her who was acting like that.
「She didn't say captain just now! She mean the body's health, not Yuu! Remember this lesson from Tia as your senpai!」
「Heh? Aa────p-pardon me……」
Jeanne noticed her misunderstanding and she shrunk into herself with her face boiling red.
Everyone laughed at that and the atmosphere softened. There I turned my gaze at Iris and asked her about the most important thing.
「Managing our health is important, but there won't be any problem as long as we don't stay up late. More importantly Iris──this gathering isn't for something like the last supper, or good memory to take to the afterlife, or to not leave behind any regret…….it's not for that kind of heavy purpose right?」

I wouldn’t get along with it if that was what she wanted to do, but I knew that wasn’t the case as soon as I saw Iris’s face. I still asked the question even then in order to have those who felt hesitation in playing to know about Iris’s true intention.
And then just as I thought, Iris nodded without any hesitation.
「Yep, you see I──want to play with everyone and keep in mind that this kind of daily life will continue forever from here on……I want to believe in that. I also want everyone to believe in that. That’s why let’s do this like usual…… um, but I haven’t think of what to play……w-what to do Firill-chan?」
Iris looked toward Firill asking for help.
She looked toward Iris with a slightly surprised look, but then she gasped and raised her index finger.
「Fu-fu-fu, I thought that’s what is going on here, so I have prepared properly.」
Firill took out the cloth bag that she placed behind her and rummaged inside it. It seemed that she came bringing multiple games with her.
Lisa made an uneasy expression seeing Firill like that.
「The games that Firill-san bring with her are always strange……to be honest it makes me worried.」
「It’s alrighttt. As expected I’m not bringing stationary retro game with me. I only have with me simple games that can be played anywhere. First is──this I guess.」
Firill said that and took out a folded sheet from her bag.
「Ah」
It was Mitsuki who reflexively raised her voice and turned red.
Even though the sheet was folded, I could see several round circles in various color printed on it.
──Don’t tell me.
I never saw the actual thing, but even I had an idea of what that thing was.
Firill looked satisfied at Mitsuki’s expression and spread the sheet.
「Tadaa. This is that famous game where you turn the roulette and place your arm or leg at the designated color……or rather an imitation of it!」
Firill vigorously spread the sheet in the cramped space between beds.
「Ah, even I know about this──but it’s not the actual thing?」
Ariella peered onto the sheet curiously. Firill nodded at her.
「Yep, the original has four colors and the circles are lined up systematically, but this one has five colors and they are positioned all over the place. It’s set so that the game is more trilling and easier for happening to occur.」
Firill said that and gave us a thumb up.
「Happening……」
Ariella seemed to imagine something and blushed.
「I-it’s indecent.…..」
Lisa glanced at me for some reason before looking down.
A strange mood drifted in the air. Tia and Iris raised their voices innocently amidst that.

「Waaah, it's pretty, there are a lot of colors! Tia want to try it first!」
「Ah, I also want to! What should you do to win?」
Firill started explaining happily.
「Stand on the sheet, then move your hand or foot to the designated color in order. Then the one who lose their balance first is the loser. But in my opinion, it will be better if Mononobe-kun also join in rather than only Tia and Iris playing with each other.」
「Tia will be happy if Yuu also play together but……why?」
Tia asked back in confusion. Firill gave her an implicating smile.
I felt a chill seeing that from the side.
「This game will be far more fun if man and woman play it together. You will get it if you try it, come on, Mononobe-kun too!」
I reluctantly stood up when Firill beckoned me.
「We are going to do it with three people? This room is cramped so we can't spread out the mat fully, playing it with just two people will be──」
「Don't mind the little thing, don't mind. We have a lot of people here, so some of us won't get a turn if we do it one by one right?」
──One by one?
I felt that statement was strange because at least two people could play this game at the same time, but Firill began the game without giving me any time to ask.
「The first round is Iris and Tia and Mononobe-kunnn. Those who still don't understand the rule will get it by watching. Then I'll turn the roulette now.」
Firill turned the cheap looking plastic roulette that was attached at the edge of the sheet.
「Mononobe-kun, put your right foot on red.」
「……Roger.」
For now I could only do it so I stepped on a red circle just as instructed.
「Iris is left hand on blue. Tia is left foot on yellow.」
Firill also instructed Iris and Tia. The two of them put their limb on the color that was instructed.
And then as expected──by the fourth command, our posture had ended up in a messed up state.
「M-Mononobe~! D-don't moveee! Your arm is……b-between my legs……」
Iris was sandwiching my arm between her legs. In addition she was leaning on my back while raising her voice uneasily.
「Y-you too Iris, don't put your weight on me. I won't be able to keep my balance like this, and, your breasts are……」
I replied back at Iris while maintaining my posture of crawling on all fours. In addition Tia's small buttocks were shaking in front of my eyes.
「Y-Yuu, c-could it be you can see Tia's panty?」
「It's fine, I still can't see it. I can't see it so change your posture quickly.」
My face would plunge into Tia's skirt if I relaxed even just for a bit, so I supported Iris's weight that was leaning on me while desperately hanging on.

Meanwhile everybody else was watching us with reddened cheeks.
「—See? This is what'll happen as the game progress. Fun isn't it?」
Firill turned the roulette while puffing out her chest proudly.
「It's indecent as I thought……」
Lisa folded her arms and muttered sullenly.
「Eh? Then Lisa won't play?」
However when she was asked that, she hurriedly shook her head.
「T-that's not what I'm saying. I don't want to run away from a match……and if it's against Mononobe Yuu, it's not like I hate it……」
Firill grinned at that statement and next she turned toward Mitsuki.
「What about Mitsuki? Are you unable to turn a blind eye to this illicit sexual relationship game as the student council president?」
Then Mitsuki tilted her head with a serious face.
「……Firill-san, what are you saying? Nii-san and I have a special relationship where we understand each other through our connected heart. It won't possibly turn into an illicit act just from us having fun playing together. That's why, I'll play with Nii-san next.」
Firill was overwhelmed by that pressure and she nodded awkwardly with cold sweat trickling from her forehead.
「It looks like Mitsuki has gotten over it since a long time ago. And so, all of us want to play with Mononobe-kun, so Mononobe-kun will stay even after this round is over! Let's play two people taking turn each timeee!」
Naturally I objected when I heard that. Only one person would take turn each time even though it was a game of two people—I finally understood the meaning of those words.
「Firill, what about my break time!?」
「There is none—. Mononobe-kun is a boy and my prince, so do your best! Fiiight!」
Firill cheered me on with a clenched fist, but strength suddenly left my body. Iris yelled with a shrill voice at the next moment.
「Hyauh!? M-Mononobe—d-don't rub that plac—yah……aa—」
It seemed because my body slightly moved, a sensitive spot on Iris's body got touched.
「S-sorry!」
However because my body reflexively moved to get away from Iris's body as much as possible, my nose pushed into Tia's skirt next.
「Funyah!? Y-Yuu, that's ticklish~!」
The two of them writhed and then they lost their balance.
「Ooo, as expected from Mononobe-kun. You defeated both of them simultaneously. Your princely power is really great. Perhaps I should prepare a reward for those who can win against Mononobe-kun if it's like this.」
Firill muttered in admiration. Ren quickly reacted at her.
「If possible—I want to sleep with Onii-chan tonight.」

The air froze instantly. However the speaker Ren only tilted her head in puzzlmeent. Seeing that, the tense atmosphere slackened.
Ariella who had Ren on her lap hurriedly gave a follow up with a red face.
「R-right, if it's just sleeping together……that might be acceptable! No problem will occur if everyone else also sleep in this room after all――」
If one bed was crammed with two or three people, then everyone should be able to sleep in this room even if Kili and Vritra joined. However I still hadn't accepted that condition.
「No, today it'll be better if everyone can sleep well――」
I tried to settle the matter as amicably as possible, but Mitsuki walked to the sheet and declared.
「It's decided then. The upper limit is two people, and in case the number is more than that we shall decide it with a play-off. Then Nii-san, let's battle.」
「……Yes.」
It was already too late. I gave up and nodded.
「I shall also participate.」
Lisa also stood on the sheet replacing Iris and Tia.
The two's expression was serious even though this should be a game. I unconsciously stepped back. But naturally there was no place to escape.
「Then second round, beginnn」
Like that the battle began again.
Furthermore the development this time was slightly different from before.
「……M-Mitsuki. Why are you deliberately choosing the circle beside me?」
At the third command, Mitsuki moved her left hand to the circle right beside my right hand even though it caused her posture to become slightly uncomfortable. For some reason she was gradually reducing her distance with me even though it was only giving her disadvantage.
「Why……isn't it obvious? It's because I want to be close to Nii-san.」
Then Mitsuki replied shyly with blushing cheeks.
I also got embarrassed from being told that. I couldn't bear to see Mitsuki's face that was right beside me.
But when I looked to the side, there was Lisa's bright red face there.
「Y-you're also close Lisa.」
「It can't be helped. The sheet is too small. Next I have to put my right foot on yellow……it's between your legs, so please pardon me.」
Lisa's leg entered between my legs that were spread wide open. The right half of my body was almost glued on her body. Lisa's softness was transmitted to me clearly.
「Aaa, you're sly Lisa-san! Firill-san, it's my turn next, turn the roulette quickly!」
Mitsuki hurried Firill on. Then her left hand reached to a red circle just as instructed.
However because the three of us were already at the closest distance with each other, an unexpected "gluing" occurred there.
――*Pofun*

Such sound effect echoed inside my head when I saw Lisa’s shaking breasts.
Yes—Mitsuki’s face plunged between Lisa’s large breasts because she was leaning forward.
「Fuwah……L-Lisa-san, I can’t breathe~……」
Mitsuki whose faced was buried between the voluptuous twin hills wriggled in distress.
「M-Mitsuki-san, please don’t struggle! If you move like that—」
Lisa panicked, but she couldn’t tear off Mitsuki away from her because she couldn’t move her arms and legs. It seemed Mitsuki also didn’t intend to withdraw because the result of the game was hanging on this.
Lisa’s clothes got messed up as they were doing that. The ribbon on her neck was undone and several of her buttons were unbuttoned……the valley of her white breasts was—.
「Kyaaah!? Mitsuki-san, why are you burrowing into my breasts!?」
「I-it’s not intentional! But……I-I can’t breathe……it’s warm……it feels like my mind is floating. Is this the motherhood, possessed by woman with abundant breasts……」
「That’s merely your oxygen shortage talking!」
Lisa retorted at Mitsuki whose consciousness was starting to become hazy.
Because it looked like Mitsuki would drop if we didn’t quickly change posture, we quickly took turn and moved our limbs.
However the result faced us with even more predicament.
「Gu, gugugu……」
In front of my eyes was Lisa’s opened chest.
It felt like the white valley was going to suck me in various senses. I did everything I could to endure it in my unnatural posture.
「N-Nii-san, you must not go over there! No……but this match will be ours if Nii-san’s consciousness is robbed by Lisa-san’s chcest……w-what should I—」
Mitsuki was looking up anxiously at Lisa and me in a bridge posture.
「Mononobe Yuu……it’s alright even if you don’t force yourself. Mitsuki-san’s violation before this has made me resolved myself. I’ll end your hardship with this chest.」
Lisa got defiant and pushed out her voluptuous chest with a bright red face.
「Lisa, calm down! You’ll get absurdly embarrassed later if you do something like that!」
「I’m already embarrassed enough! Now that it has come to this, things won’t be balanced unless I obtain some kind of result from this!」
Lisa intentionally shook her body to appeal with her chest at me.
Boing boing The movement of her shaking twin hills was dulling my mind like hypnotist. My face naturally went forward—.
「A-as I thought it’s no good!!」
However Mitsuki reflexively reached out with her hand just before my face plunged into Lisa’s chest.

She tightly grabbed Lisa’s chest with that hand. Lisa who was focused on me reacted over sensitively to that.
「Kyaah!? Wait Mitsuki-san──that’s foul play……hyah!?」
Right after that both Lisa and Mitsuki lost their balance and fell.

Cheers rose from everyone who was entranced by the match. Firill let out a sigh of admiration.
「Mononobe-kun is the sole survivor again……he is really a tough opponent. But I have ascertained Mononobe-kun's weakness from the battle just now. Jeanne──let's defeat Mononobe-kun together with me.」
「Eeh!? I'm next!?」
Jeanne asked back in panic when her name was called.
「Yep, there is only Jeanne and I who has big breasts among the remaining members. Ah, someone please take my place to turn the roulette.」
Firill walked to stand on the sheet after saying that.
「I-is captain weak against big breasts……?」
Jeanne hid her breasts in bewilderment while sending glances at me.
I didn't know how I should react here. I looked up to the ceiling while doing my best to fill my heart with emptiness.
Ariella and Ren who automatically became the last pair stared at their own breasts and made a conflicted expression.
「As I thought, Mononobe-kun like big breasts.」
「Nnu……it's still, not definite. I, believe on Onii-chan.」
I listened to those mutterings while entering the third battle.
──Well, Jeanne was wearing male uniform, so there wouldn't be many places on her body that would trouble me to look at.
In all the battles until now, it was the skirt rather than chest that made me the wariest.
Because their underwear could come into view just from a bit of movement, I had to be careful with my positioning and angle.
It was an advantage for me because in this round my burden in that regard was halved.
But──.
「Wait, why are you opening up your chest right from the start!」
Right after the game started, I yelled when seeing the two's clothes.
Firill unbutonned the buttons on her chest, while Jeanne took off her necktie──and also unbuttoned three of her buttons.
Because of that the moment the two of them placed their hands on the sheet and leaned forward, white valleys flew into my sight.
「Sorry, Mononobe-kun. It's a bit hot here……」
「I-it's thermoregulation, captain.」
Firill made some barefaced excuse, but their objective was clearly to agitate me.
「Mononobee, put your left hand on bluee」

Iris who took on the role of turning the roulette gave me instruction. I changed my posture so that I wouldn't look straight at them.
It wasn't like they were telling me to not look, so there was no need to go this far but—when I thought that Mitsuki and others were watching, it made me unconsciously put on airs. I wasn't doing this because I feared getting scolded later……not at all.
「It's left foot on red for me huh……captain, excuse me.」
However Jeanne circled to right in front of me and put her foot on a position that made it hard for me to move.
That posture also put a large burden on Jeanne, but her expression didn't look particularly distressed.
—Dammit.
I noticed there. Not wearing skirt was also advantageous for Jeanne. Everyone else was wearing skirt, so their movement was restricted. However Jeanne had no need to be concerned with her posture.
「Fufu, Mononobe-kun……it looks like you finally understand the situation that you are placed in. But, we won't go easy on you.」
Firill grinned and supported Jeanne by cutting off my path of escape.
No matter which direction I turned to, there would be a large white valley waiting to lead me astry. Our body would touch each other if I carelessly moved my limbs. It made my thought circuit to start running in circles.
「Ah……」
My heated up brain finally made a mistake.
I put my hand on a circle far away, because of that my posture became strained and my knees were starting to tremble.
—This is, would I hold until my next turn came?
I resolved myself like that, but Firill's voice reverberated at that timing.
「Wai-……M-Mononobe-kun……yah……t-that's, sneaky……y-your knee, my side—fuh……fufufu……ahahahahahahah!」
Firill suddenly started laughing.
It seemed my knee was touching Firill's side. Firill twisted her body and tried to endure her laughter, but this time it made Jeanne's body shook.
「Wha—m-my neck is weak—hyah……sto—」
The two writhed. Naturally their body was also touching me, so soft sensation was transmitted to me from various places.
I became unable to put strength into my whole body. The moment I felt that I was at my limit—Firill and Jeanne fell on the sheet first.
「Mononobe-kun, that's unfairrrr」
Firill threw a tantrum while lying face up, but Jeanne tidied up her clothes while shaking her head.
「We were the one who schemed first. Let's accept our defeat graciously. Captain……as expected from you.」
Jeanne left while dragging the sulking Firill.
And then Ariella and Ren who still hadn't joined the game walked forward to take their place.

「Now, we are your opponent this time. Mononobe-kun, I praise you for not losing against big breasts.」
Ren nodded deeply at Ariella's words.
「Nn, Firill and Jeanne picked the wrong strategy. Rather than robbing the opponent's presence of mind with breast's appeal, they should attack more directly. Onii-chan managed to survive until this far by doing that.」
I got a bad premonition seeing them so confident for some reason.
But—after the game began for some time, it was continuing to progress peacefully so far unlike all the rounds before this.
「Yup, next is yellow.」
Ariella who had lithe body and also excellent sense of balance was moving her arms and legs easily. She showed no sign of falling even when taking a pose like in yoga exercise.
「Nn……next is here.」
The petite Ren crawled to my bosom and continued the game in narrow range.
I ended up looming over Ren, but thanks to Ren's small body, our bodies didn't touch each other.
However Ren's eyes twinkled when Ariella circled to right behind me.
「Onee-chan, Cat Cat Operation start.」
「R-roger. It's embarrassing but……I'll do my best for Ren's sake!」
—Operation?
I raised my guard wondering what they were planning to do.
Ren looked up at me and smiled adorably.
「I'll give my all to fawn on Onii-chan……nyaa」
「N-nyaa?」
I was bewildered by her smile and words. Then Ren bent her body to rub her soft red hair on my chest.
She was like a fawning cat—.
「I'll also do it okay, Mononobe-kun. Prepare yourself……nya」
Ariella added "nya" at the end of her sentence shyly. She pushed her hand on my side from behind me.
「Tsu……wha-……sto—it's tickli—」
Not only it was embarrassing, it was also ticklish. I couldn't defend because I couldn't use my limbs. I could only twist my body to escape but……when I did that my body lost balance.
「Kuh……so this is Cat Cat Operation……」
I let my guard down due to the fancy name, but in this game this was the optimum way to disturb the opponent.
Ren and Ariella had firm footing, so there wasn't any chance of them self-destructing from attacking too much.
「Onii-chan……you have a different scent from everyone……nyaa」
「What's this, it's like I'm marking Mononobe-kun……my heart is pounding……nya」

The two completely became cats as though they were delirious with fever and toyed with me.
—I can’t, keep going.
If it was like this then my only option was to fall while dragging everyone with me so that it ended with a draw.
I resolved myself to get unbalanced. I held Ariella who was rubbing her head on my side with my arm. And then I immediately tried to fall on top of Ren.
That’s naïve Mononobe-kun—I’ll at least protect Ren even if I fall down……nyah
Ariella put her weight to behind and forcefully changed my falling direction.
Because of that I fell on the sheet without hitting Ren.
Ren was the only one remaining.

「Waaah!! It’s Ren-chan’s victoryyy!」
Iris lifted up Ren’s arm and declared her victory.
「Nn……so happy. But, actually I want to win together with Onee-chan.」
Ren muttered in disappointment, but Ariella stood up and gently patted her red hair.
「I told you it’s fine, after all I only wanted to grant Ren’s wish. You can get Mononobe-kun to spoil you as much as you want today.」
「Nn――――I’ll do that.」
Ren nodded.
They were deciding things as they pleased, but I accepted the result without saying anything.
I too wanted to grant Ren’s wish.
「Well, this is what Ren-san wanted……and if they’re just going to sleep normally, I don’t think it will cause any difficulty for the decisive battle tomorrow.」
Lisa smiled wryly in acceptance.
「Yes. If it’s Kili-san then Nii-san might be in danger but, I can trust Ren-san to not do anything strange. Though I’m feeling a different kind of threat as a little sister……」
After Mitsuki said that, Firill looked around.
「Come to think of it, in the end both Kili and Vritra doesn’t come.」
Hearing that, Iris stood up vigorously.
「――As I thoguht, I’ll go look for Kili-chan and Vritra-chan! If we’re playing, doing it together with everyone is will be better!」
At that time, it suddenly became bright just for an instant outside the window.
.
DOOOOOOOONN――!!
.
Next there was thunderous sound that shook the quietness of the night.
「I-is it thunder!?」
Tia raised her voice in surprise, but perhaps it wasn’t thunder just now.
When I turned my gaze toward the cabin’s window, the outline of the island that was interrupting the night sky was dyed red.
And then there were two small fire balls flying around at the sky――.
「Fire……?」
Iris muttered in a daze, but Jeanne spoke with a bitter voice.
「No, that’s not it. I――can see everything that is going on.」
Jeanne who possessed a sight that surpassed ordinary person let out a heavy sigh while pressing her hand on her forehead.

「Y-you can see what happen!? D-don’t tell me that Angolmois is attacking……」
Lisa demanded for an explanation in panic.
「What’s going on, Jeanne.」
I also questioned her. In respond Jeanne shook her head and told us the identity of the fire balls.
「What’s flying around at the sky is Kili and Vritra. In other words this might be…..just a mother-daughter quarrel.」
.

Part 2

「Everyone, tell the situation to Shinomiya-sensei and Major Loki. The start of the operation tomorrow might get delayed if they halt the resupplying because of this. I'm──going to stop their quarrel.」
I gave instructions quickly before running out of the room immediately.
The supply ship had already arrived and the maintenance on Naglfar was being carried out. The crews who didn't know anything must be surprised by the explosion just now.
「Mononobe! I'm going too! Because surely I……I'm the cause of this!」
A voice came from behind me. When I turned around, Iris was there chasing after me. There was also Ren behind her.
「……Let's end the quarrel quickly, so I can sleep together with Onii-chan.」
Ren muttered with a serious expression even while rubbing her eyes.
「Got it. Ren──it'll be faster to fly, so lend me your help.」
「Nn.」
Ren nodded. Her red hair shook behind her.
Iris and I couldn't fly using material conversion. Now I could do floating with an application of Anti-Gravity, but the usage of the authority would induce dragonification in me.
And then in case I turned into dragon, I would have to use Neun's authority to return to normal, so there was a risk it would put a burden on Iris. That was why I couldn't use Anti-Gravity lightly.
When we got out to the deck, we saw the supply ship anchored alongside Naglfar.
As expected it seemed the crews were in panic, but I left it to Mitsuki and others to deal with that while I turned my gaze toward the island.
「Kili and Vritra……it looks like they are still going at it flashily. Ren, I'm counting on you.」
Flame blasts burst on the pitch black island. I watched that while holding out my hand toward Ren.
「Nn──Mjolnir(Pulverizing Miracle Hammer).」
Ren formed a fictitious armament on her right hand and grabbed my hand with her empty left hand.
「Come on, Iris too.」
Ren had her hands full with this, so I urged Iris to grab my hand.
「Ah, yeah. Take care of me, Ren-chan.」
Iris strongly grasped my hand and smiled at Ren.

「Nn, leave it to me.」
Ren replied shortly and lifted her fictitious armament to the sky. Then a gentle wind blew and our body floated up.
I felt a large wind barrier enveloping our surrounding.
The figure of battlefield Naglfar was getting further and here I could take an unbroken view of the simple harbor where the ship was currently anchored.
The port was bright due to the lightning that was set up there, but the island was pitch black. However thanks to that the explosions that were caused by the mother-daughter quarrel looked extremely eye-catching.
「Ah, there is a boom there!」
Iris pointed to the west of the island. Ren immediately changed direction to there.
It seemed that their air battle had ended. The explosion and flame were spreading on the ground.
There were few trees on this island. The majority was a wasteland with rocks and stones lying around. Because of that the visibility wasn't bad.
「──Nn. There.」
Ren muttered that and began to dive down.
I endured a feeling of weightlessness like when riding an amusement park attraction while looking down.
There was a circle of flame with a diameter of dozens of meter spreading over there. A small silhouette was standing at the center of it.
──That's Vritra. Then Kili is…….
I moved my gaze and immediately found her figure too.
Kili and holding up both her hands toward the circle while staring straight at Vritra.
It seemed that Kili was trying to lock Vritra in flame but──to me it looked like Kili was the one getting cornered.
Her expression had no composure. Large beads of sweats were trickling from her forehead. On the other hand, Vritra who was standing within a prison of flame was staring at Kili with a calm gaze──without a single drop of sweat on her body.
「Nn, landing.」
Ren gave that signal and landed down with us a slight distance away from the flame circle.
「Kili-chan, Vritra-chan! Stop!」
Iris started running the moment her feet touched the ground. She yelled loudly.
「──Don't come!!」
However Kili sharply yelled at her to stop. Iris stopped running.
「This is my……my personal battle. Okaa-sama is my prey. If anyone get in my way……I'll burn them to death no matter who they are.」

Kili glared at Iris with a gaze that was filled with killing intent. It seemed that she also noticed Ren and I behind Iris, but her gaze still didn’t loosen down.
「Vritra-chan is your prey? ……Why?」
「…….」
Iris asked in confusion, but Kili didn’t seem like she would answer any further.
However a voice came from the middle of the flame in exchange.
「My daughter is recklessly trying to kill me. In order to become the next Vritra.」
A cold wind was blowing violently with Vritra at the center. The flame was put down.
Vritra who was standing on a scorched land turned a gaze that was filled with exasperation at Kili.
「The next……Vritra?」
I looked at Kili with question of what did that mean. She only shrugged slightly.
「If I kill Okaa-sama, I’ll be able to get my hand on the full power to create Dark Matter──the seventh authority of Vritra. With that, it will be possible to stop Angolmois, construct Marduk, or even helping Iris-chan──to do all that by myself.」
Iris’s face went pale when she heard Kili’s words. She took a step forward.
「You mustn’t Kili-chan! If it’s for my sake then──」
However *Bam* a small explosion suddenly went off in front of her. Iris was surprised and fell on her butt.
Most likely that was Kili’s specialty, Muspelheim(Calamity Flame World). It converted a very minute amount of Dark Matter that couldn’t be seen by eyes into heat.
「Are you alright?」
I helped Iris to stand up. Ren was peering from behind me in worry.
「Nnu……Iris, you alright?」
「Y-yeah, I’m just a bit surprised.」
Iris nodded and stood up. Kili told her with a cold voice.
「I told you to not come right? I’m telling you, this isn’t for Iris-chan’s sake. Helping you is just secondary. In the end this is for my own sake──I’m acting for my own reason.」
Kili stressed her words at Iris with a strong tone. Then she moved her gaze to Vritra.
「I can’t tolerate Okaa-sama anymore. She is only looking at far ahead while she won’t look at what is right before her! She won’t consider of what is right beside her at the present! That’s no different at all with not being here at all. That’s why──I’ll erase here from “the present(here)”!」
Kili spoke her words with a fierce anger in them, even so Vritra’s expression didn’t change.
「……Do you seriously think that you can kill me?」

Kili's lips twisted at that question.
「The way you speak sounds like you think that's impossible. Certainly I can't even match a single pinky of Okaa-sama when it come to controlling Dark Matter. But, the me right now has ability that Okaa-sama doesn't have!」
Kili yelled that before golden particle flowed out from her body.
「Hraesvelgr's power is it……」
Vritra narrowed her eyes. Kili responded with a fearless smile.
「That's not all. Yuu also shared Code Lost with everyone who became his mate. I wasn't at that place but……Fafnir's power should also reside inside me.」
Just as Kili said, I also thought of Kili when I transferred the authorities. The percentage was small but, it was true that Kili also had Code Lost.
Most likely, that would be effective against Vritra who was doing her activity in human form.
However Vritra didn't show any panic.
「Even so, thou must only have a small portion of that power. I don't feel any danger from thou like when I confronted Neun previously. In the first place……can thou seriously hold a killing intent toward thy mother?」
Kili gritted her teeth audibly when she was told that.
「Who are you……calling mother.」
The wind that was filled with golden particles caressed my cheek. Ether Wind was overflowing in respond to the movement of Kili's heart.
「Nn, sparkly……pretty」
Ren looked up to the scattering particles and narrowed her eyes.
But Kili wasn't entranced by such sight. Her emotion was stirred even stronger.
「The current Okaa-sama don't have the power to create life from zero right? If you can do that then you should be able to mass produce even Counter Dragon as many as you want. What you can do is only adding a bit on something that has existed from the start at best. Just like how you scattered your factor to create "D".」
「……」
Vritra held her tongue and silently listened to Kili's words.
The question that Kili spoke out was also something that had been on my mind. But before, when I touched this topic. Vritra didn't give me any answer.
However Kili followed her momentum and stepped forward.
「Then, surely even this "me" is the same. Okaa-sama didn't create me from zero. Surely there was something that served as my base. Even with that as the case, can you still proclaim yourself as my mother!?」
She put her hand on her chest and piled up questions as though to cut at Vritra.
「Kili……」

However to me it looked like Kili was the one who got hurt by that. I moved forward thinking that this couldn’t go on.
It was then, Ether Wind got blown by strong wind toward us.
.
「—Why. Why is Okaa-sama—」
.
I heard a faint voice inside the golden wind.
—This is Kili’s…….
The moment my mind was turned toward that voice, an unfamiliar scene spread inside my mind.
.

Part 3

When I gained awareness, I was already travelling together with a blue giant.
I guessed I was around five years old at that time. Before then there was no boundary of ego in me.
I shared my consciousness with “Black” Vritra and took the necessary action—I was simply a terminal.
Vritra created an “extension” of herself in order to act outside of Yggdrasil’s watch.
The blue giant was Vritra’s fictitious armament. A device to scatter “D” factor all over the world.
Humans called it the Blue Dragon—”Blue” Hecatoncheires and feared it.
That was why humans would immediately disappear from the cities that I visited together with the giant.
I became aware that I was “I” when I was left alone in an empty city.
The impetus was very trivial.
Until then the only thing that I ate was what Vritra commanded me to eat.
That day was also no different.
Vritra detected that I got hungry and urged me to eat the sandwich that was left behind at an empty café terrace.
But—I got curious with the cup that was placed beside the plate.
I was instructed that there was no need to drink the light brown liquid remaining inside the cup, but for some reason, I felt puzzled.
Perhaps that was a curiosity that any young kid would have.
The liquid was entered inside the cup, so it should be something that human drank. And yet why was it unnecessary for me to drink? It made me wanted to ascertain it.
I couldn’t suppress that impulse and hesitantly brought the light brown liquid toward my mouth……it was too bitter that I spat it out.
「Gehoh, gehoh……」
.
—I told thee that thou doesn’t need that thing. Why didn’t thou obey my instruction?
.
There for the first time I heard Vritra’s voice as something “external”.
「Because, I was curious……」
That was also my first time talking.

I became aware that Vritra was a different existence from me since that moment.
Vritra could share her knowledge with me to some degree, and I also didn't have any feeling of going against her command but, I couldn't go back to be mere terminal anymore.
That was why I fumbled to ascertain a new nature of relationship with Vritra.
「Are you, my "mother"?」
The childish me asked the blue giant.
—My existence to thee is close to that concept. However my being can also be said as even greater than that.
The voice that I heard from the "connection" through the dragon crest was a haughty voice that was mixed with some bewilderment.
「I don't really get it but……can I call you, Okaa-sama?」
—Do as thee like……my daughter.
Like that we became something like mother and daughter.
Since then, it felt like I would talk to Okaa-sama every time I got nothing to do.
Part of it was because I simply had no one else to talk to, but a big part of it was because there was no other existence as grand, mystical, and hard to understand like Okaa-sama.
Humans who ran away simply because Okaa-sama was approaching were just too frail and pathetic—bluntly speaking they were uncool. Although we had similar form, I considered them as a different life form than me.
Young kid was a mass of curiosity. They would also held yearning toward a strong existence rather than toward weak being.
In other words I was full of curiosity toward Okaa-sama.
「Hey, Okaa-sama. Is it fun trampling on city like that?」
—No, not really. It's simply bothersome with how hard it is to walk through place with buildings sticking close to each other.
「From Okaa-sama's perspective, humans are just like ants aren't they?」
—Ant is ant, human is human. I won't do something like confusing two different creatures.
「What is Okaa-sama doing when you are free?」
—I'm continuously taking action all the time for the sake of Gaia's survival. The condition of free time is something that I never experience.
「Okaa-sama, you don't feel hungry? This snack is delicious you know?」
—Lower level material with limited possibility cannot become my sustenance. I'm a higher life form that is created from Dark Matter itself.
「Recently there are a lot of missiles attacking. Okaa-sama doesn't feel pained from them?」
—Hecatoncheires is my shadow that appear through thee. No matter how much they attempt to hurt the shadow, it won't affect the real body at all. But……it will be troubling if thee get dragged into the attack and receive lethal wound. Take as much distance as possible from me from here on.

「I get it Okaa-sama.」
When human's attack toward Hecatoncheires increased in intensity, I was told to take as much distance as possible from Hecatoncheires.
The blue giant was like a shadow that was stretching from under my foot for very, very long—it followed the path that I walked on.
Because of that, my life changed a little.
Because I walked ahead of Hecatoncheires, I was able to look around at cities before the citizens evacuated.
Hot country, cold country, humid country, dry country, abundant country, poor country—I visited various places.
However my days of getting involved with humans were simply troublesome.
「Okaa-sama, today there was another foolish humans who tried to lay their hand on me.」
—Are thou injured?
「No, of course not. I turned the table on them.」
The "broken remains" of the men who tried to kidnap me were lying around my feet. I stared at them in annoyance.
It seemed that a little girl who walked around by herself was seen as "high quality prey" by a lot of humans.
I naturally learned how to fight through repelling that kind of people. My scorn toward human also deepened through that.
Sometimes I would also walk behind Hecatoncheires, but the public order of the cities I visited in that way was bad and the number of trashes approaching me also increased.
「Okaa-sama should just trample the likes of humans until none of them remain.」
Those words came from my heart. It was also a prayer to draw a line between me and other humans, that I was a different life form from human.
However when I was conscious of such thing, I also began to realize something else.
It was none other than Okaa-sama and me who were completely different creature with each other. That I was exactly the same like human no matter what I did.
It was because of that hatred to the same kind that I became merciless toward "human who I couldn't bear to see".
I turned those who tried to hunt me into ash. I also disposed ugly human who caught my sight.
Sometimes doing that resulted in me helping other people. Before I realized it humans who worshipped me began to gather around me.
They said this. I was an incarnation of dragon, an existence that was equal to god.
Those words felt very, very pleasant. It was the ideal that I imagined—.
It felt like I could forget reality when I was inside that environment……also they were simply convenient, so I ordered them around as I pleased.

I got the name of Kili Surt Muspelheim around that time.
Being worshipped as dragon made me able to think of myself as a special existence, but for some reason I felt stifled—I crossed the sea as though to run away and came to the farthest east.
That country was peaceful. There was also no adult that attacked me just because I walked alone. It felt like I could relax there just for a bit.
Hecatoncheires that was following me mercilessly trampled on that peace, but even after that no insurrection really occurred and the people silently endeavored to rebuild.
It gave me a feeling like I was being ignored.
It seemed that for the people of that country, dragon was simply a calamity, not a target for them to directly vent their emotion at.
It was a world that was far away from hatred and worship.
It was there I obtained a leeway to turn my focus to something else than myself for the first time.
Nyaa.
「—What? Are you feeling hungry?」
That must be why I did something so unfamiliar like feeding a stray cat. It got attached to me, which bewildered me—I tried to run away from it.
「I'm begging you, don't follow me around.」
Even though I pushed it away, the kitten made a fawning voice and followed me briskly with small steps.
「I gave you food just now only because of a whim. I won't give you any again even if you come with me, and I also can't keep you.」
I didn't know what to do and lectured it with all seriousness, but the kitten only stared at me with large round eyes.
「If you want to live, it'll be better if you leave this city quickly rather than begging me for food. If you don't—」
I continued lecturing it while walking at the riverside area. However I suddenly felt a gaze there. When I turned around, I saw a boy sitting at the dry riverbed was staring at me with a puzzled look.
I realized that I was doing something really idiotic. Blood rose to my face.
「Tsu……anyway, don't follow me anymore.」
I didn't want to expose my unsightly side any further than this and left the kitten with a quick pace.
However when I turned around while crossing the bridge, the kitten was still following me.
A large dump car came at that timing. The kitten was surprised and leaped over the bridge's railing.
But the wind was stirred when the dump car passed. It blew the kitten to the river—.
「———」
I didn't know why I made such choice at that time.
But, my body was already midair when I realized.

I jumped almost reflexively after the kitten that was falling to the river below.
「Aah geez, just what are you doing!」
I muttered words that I myself didn't know whether I was directing them to the kitten or to myself. I fell into the cold river.
Fortunately, I immediately found the kitten.
.
「Oi, are you alright!?」
.
There an anxious voice and the sound of something pushing through the water reached my ear.
I stood up with the wet and curling kitten in my arms. I looked toward the human who entered the river and wetted his clothes.
It was the boy who was staring at me from the riverbed before this.
「……You, what is it?」
I tilted my head in puzzlement of his reason to approach this way.
「You ask what……no, you fell to the river, so I came to help.」
Why are you doing something so stupid──I thought.
But, I realized that right now I too……was doing that kind of stupid act.
「I see──that's kind of you.」
I felt really amused. It was refreshing that there was a human who tried to help me.
The same like how I saved the cat.
Yes, a human "who was the same" like me also existed in this world.
That fact made me happy more than I thought possible──that was why I pushed the cat I saved on the boy and warned him like this.
「Take this cat away from this city. Hecatoncheires is going to come here tomorrow.」
The boy was naturally confused.
He asked me how did I know that.
I wanted to engrave my existence into him, I wanted to show him that we were the same though I was "special", so I told him this.
.
「Because I'm also──a dragon.」
.
He was paralyzed from surprise. I was satisfied by his reaction and left.
But, I stayed in that city for a bit after that.
I wanted to ascertain that he had evacuated together with the kitten, so I waited until Hecatoncheires caught up with me.
And then I saw it. That shocking scene.
.
「AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!」
.
The boy roared.
Hecatoncheires vanished inside the azure flame.

Okaa-sama's scream reverberated inside my head.
Impossible. Unbelievable.
Because I thought that the likes of human couldn't even hold a candle to my Okaa-sama, that she was a higher existence.
I would be lying if I said that I wasn't disappointed.
But, at the same time I also felt happiness.
The existence that I thought as absolutely unreachable, that I thought as impossible to stand shoulder to shoulder with. The possibility to reach it was right over there.
.
I—might be able to become a true dragon.
.
Since then, the target of my curiosity toward "the strong" moved from Okaa-sama to that boy—Mononobe Yuu.
I thought that he was the one, the key for me to become a worthy existence as Vritra's daughter.
Thinking back, I was fixated with relationship of mother and daughter.
I also stupidly didn't hold any doubt that Okaa-sama was treating me as her "daughter".
She was worried for my wellbeing because she would be troubled if the terminal to move Hecatoncheires was gone.
She called me daughter just for convenience.
I mustn't expect human emotion from something that wasn't human.
It was something that could be understood just by thinking a little about it.
But I was a child who didn't even understand that.
I was hopelessly "human".
There were signs of it I guess.
At the very least I could only be called idiot for not noticing it with Tia's case.
Tia was raised to be trump card against Yggdrasil, but when she was imprinted by Basilisk, Okaa-sama easily changed her intended usage.
Even though I was reluctant to give Tia to Basilisk because I had worked hard to be able to become Tia's "mother"……Okaa-sama didn't have any feeling toward Tia who could be considered as her "grandchild" in a sense.
Okaa-sama said—that this way would be more beneficial for Gaia's future.
I felt an indescribable feeling of opposition, but I obediently obeyed her that time. I accepted that way would be happiness for Tia too.
But I should understand it if only I imagined it a little. That I was also the same like Tia.
But I believed that I was special without any basis for it—I told myself that I was Vritra's daughter.
And then reality was thrust before me.
Okaa-sama forcefully rewrote my dragon crest and offered me to Hraesvelgr. My connection with Okaa-sama was also severed.
I finally realized there.

That I wasn’t Vritra’s daughter or anything.
That I was nothing but a tool to be used up for the sake of future that Okaa-sama pictured.
—It wasn’t like I was resenting her for that.
I was simply an idiot.
I simply felt pity, sadness, and great loneliness to myself who was clinging on something that didn’t exist.
Of course I was irritated, but there wasn’t any way to take revenge or anything to Okaa-sama, so I switched my thinking.
But after that—Okaa-sama who created a human vessel for herself got her power sealed and fell until my level.
I miraculously could became the same like Okaa-sama.
My wish to stand side by side with “Black” Vritra could be said as fulfilled at that time.
But, even though I could just feel satisfied with that……I expected something more.
Okaa-sama was starting to change by getting used to her position as a member of Brunhilde class and spending time as powerless human. At this rate surely our relationship as mother and daughter could continue in the future, Okaa-sama would pay attention at what was right before her eyes—I thought.
It was just a one-sided assumption from me.
I understood. I understood but—.
.
「—there won’t be the second time. I won’t save thee even if thou fall into the same state once more.」
.
Okaa-sama discarded the present for the future once more.
I couldn’t forgive those words. I thought that I couldn’t accept it.
I couldn’t stop myself from feeling betrayed.
I took care of Okaa-sama when she was sealed. We spent every day together, played, and also had stupid fights with each other since she came to Midgard.
It felt like she was declaring that those days were pointless and worthless to me. I couldn’t endure it.
In the end Okaa-sama wouldn’t look at the present—it deeply, deeply disappointed me.
And then, I couldn’t do something like harboring this kind of feeling forever.
And so my choice was only one.
That was, to follow the impulse that was stirring me up—to challenge the existence that I couldn’t tolerate into battle.
.
「—Why. Why won’t Okaa-sama—try to stay at “the present(here)”!!」
.
I launched my flame with that scream.

Part 4

It was like an instantaneous daydream.
The images and feelings that flowed into me passed through in the blink of eye. After that almost nothing remained behind.
But, I understood what I just saw.
Just now was Kili's memory and feeling.
It filled Ether Wind and reached our heart.
Perhaps Iris and Ren had also seen the same thing. They were in a daze with a surprised lool.
But it seemed that Kili wasn't aware of what just transpired. She was simply glaring straight at Vritra.
There was no change in Vritra's expression. I didn't know whether she had also seen the scenes just now.
And then the battle resumed before I could ask her.
「Laevateinn-!!」
Kili rushed forward with a flame sword in hand.
「How pointless.」
Vritra narrowed her eyes seeing that. Then countless Dark Matters formed around her. They were converted into thick metal wall.
「Something like this-!!」
Kili swung her flame sword at the wall that was on her way.
The flame that formed the sword swelled up largely and unleashed a dazzling crimson light.
「Kuh……」
I covered my face from the heat wave that blew this way.
The flame sword's slash melted apart the wall──the wave of flame rushed to swallow Vritra who standing ahead of it.
However Dark Matter burst around Vritra. They generated powerful gust of wind that pushed back Kili's flame.
「Kili-chan!」
Iris screamed, but Kili paid her no mind and charged into the flame.
Human would burn to ash in an instant if they were exposed to sweltering heat that could melt even metal.
However Kili broke through the flame wall without slowing down at all.
The right hand that she lifted had a golden shield──.
She must have materialized a part of her mind using Ether Wind.
Then that shield wouldn't be affected by physical interference.

Major Loki dealt with that using Noa’s replica weapon, but Vritra shouldn’t have any countermeasure against Ether Wind.
「YAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!」
Kili transformed the golden shield into the shape of sword and took a large step──she swung down the shining blade with a piercing cry.
「……Hmph」
Vritra scoffed slightly. She received the attack without doing anything.
The golden blade cut apart Vritra’s small body diagonally.
It was clearly a lethal wound. Using Code Lost, that attack was sufficient to draw in the causality of death.
However Dark Matter welled up as though to trace the blade’s trajectory. It restored Vritra’s wound along with her clothes.
「How, can……」
Kili froze in her swinging posture.
She looked like she couldn’t understand why Vritra didn’t die.
Kili manifested a part of her mind using Ether Wind, but she wasn’t fully transformed into Hraesvelgr like me when I fought Major Loki.
Then Code Lost should work but──.
「Are thou satisfied now, my daughter?」
Vritra sighed. She put her hand on Kili’s arm and pushed it down.
And then she talked to Kili who still looked unsatisfied.
「I should have told thee before. That I don’t feel any danger from thee. Looking from how Code Lost didn’t work like this, the reason for that is clear. Thou are directing fierce anger and hatred toward me but──even then there is no genuine killing intent in it.」
「That’s……no, that’s impossible──I’m seriously──」
Kili’s expression stiffened and she shook her head.
Vritra stared fixedly at Kili who still hadn’t managed to sort out her emotions. Then she looked like she was resolved for something and opened her mouth slowly.
「──It’s just as thou pointed out just now. I certainly didn’t create thee from nothing.」
Kili raised her face in shock. Vritra met her gaze and continued her words.
「It seems that the sea of trees where I was hiding myself is a place that draw death to it. Many people came there to throw away their own life. Among those expiring humans, there was a pregnant woman. I made use of her fetus as thy base.」
Vritra dispassionately spoke of the secret of Kili’s origin.
There wasn’t any dramatic truth or the like in there. There was only a dry truth.
「It’s that woman that thou should call as thy true mother. In the end, I am nothing more than thy “master”. I went along with thy mother-daughter make-believe because I decided that doing that would make it easier to control thee.」
「……That’s what I thought.」

Kili spat out those words bitterly. Vritra's eyebrows twitched slightly.
"This is surprising—I thought that thou will feel genuine killing intent after hearing this but……I still don't feel anything scary from thee."
Kili frowned dubiously hearing that.
"There is no way I'll feel anything even if Okaa-sama tell me what I already suspected. But……just what are you planning? Is Okaa-sama trying to make me fly into a rage?"
"Yeah, I thought that it would be too pitiful for thee to have zero chance of being able to kill me."
Vritra nodded. Kili gritted her teeth seeing that.
"Tsu……I don't, understand your motive. Pity? That kind of emotion…… there is no way Okaa-sama has it! Don't pretend to be human after this late!"
The enraged Kili lifted up her Ether Wind sword above her head.

「I swear I'll kill Okaa-sama with my own strength. That feeling and resolve are firmly here inside my heart! If just once can't do it then I'll do it as many times as required……with this sword-──!!」
Kili said that and swung down her sword once more.
However a loud voice that pierced through the night air reverberated at that time.
.
「Quit it-!!」
.
Everyone stopped moving by that angry scolding and looked toward the source of the voice.
There we saw Ren with a bright red face.
Ren took a deep breath before she walked toward Kili and Vritra.
「Nnu……even if you do that, it's pointless. Meaningless. Kili should understand that the best.」
「Wait──I told you to not get on my way!」
Boom A small explosion blew up right beside Ren, but she kept walking forward without flinching.
「I too……have a father……who greatly irritate me, who I can't forgive no matter what. I hate……that Otou-san.」
Ren wrung out her voice to mutter that.
I recalled about Ren's father from those words.
Miyazawa Kenya──he was a dragon researcher who worked as a chief in Asgard's facility. He was a man who abandoned everything except his research.
Even so somewhere in her heart Ren was seeking for parental love from him but……when we visited Japan not long ago, Ren said that she hated him and she didn't need a father anymore before cutting off her lingering attachment to him.
「But……although I hate him──if possible, I want to punch him, on the stomach……but, I don't want him to die or anything.」
Ren stopped walking when she was at Kili's side and she clenched her small fist.
「I don't want to meet him anymore……that will make me happier……and yet, if he die──part of me don't want that. Perhaps, I'll feel sad. Kili too…… is like that isn't it?」
Ren stared at Kili wordlessly. Kili averted her gaze from that.
「Don't, group me with you.」
「Nn……certainly, Kili and me are different. Otou-san and Vritra are also different. But……they look the same.」

Ren reached out and grabbed Kili’s arm.
「I, know that Kili is really angry. But, I also know well, that you don’t want to kill Vritra.」
「———」
Kili couldn’t say anything back when Ren asserted that.
And then Ren also grabbed Vritra’s arm tightly next.
「W-what?」
Vritra asked in confusion. Ren spoke to her with a serious tone.
「Vritra is, as clumsy as my Otou-san but……I think, you are kinder than Otou-san. To me, you look like you’re properly thinking about Kili. That’s why, talk properly with her before getting into fight.」
I couldn’t see Ren’s expression from here, but Vritra was bending backward from the pressure.
「There is no reason for me to abide thy——」
「Talk.」
Vritra talked back, but she shut her mouth when Ren pressed her.
And then she glanced at Kili before nodding in resignation.
「If my daughter, has no intention to continue fighting anymore……then I too has to respond to her with words.」
Vritra met Kili’s gaze instead of Ren and began talking.
「Just now, through Ether Wind……I got a glimpse of thy feeling and memory. I believe these people also experienced the same.」
「Heh? W-what’s the deal with that?」
Kili made a dumbfounded expression before looking around at us in panic.
I responded to her with a vague smile. Ren nodded shortly at her.
Iris waved her hands in panic.
「U-umm, we saw but only a little! Kili-chan, you really loved Vritra-chan aren’t you!」
「Wha——」
Kili turned speechless. Her face was quickly turning red. Kili’s purely embarrassed face was refreshing to look.
Vritra continued talking to that Kili.
「I learned of thy perception from that, which I wish to correct.」
「M-my perception?」
Kili who was still unable to compose herself asked back with a shrill voice.
「That’s right. Thou are thinking——that I’m prioritizing Gaia’s future and judge that the “present” is worthless right?」
「……Yes, exactly. I’m correct am I?」
Kili glared. Vritra shook her head at her in respond.
「These short days where I lived with this human vessel brought me a lot of surprise and experience. There is no way those things are worthless. I now understand things that I was unable to comprehend when I didn’t have flesh body. I’m also aware now how there is no “substitute” for that noisy girl over there.」
Vritra glanced at Iris before meeting my gaze for just an instant.

It seemed that even our conversation on the deck also became something meaningful for Vritra.
「Then……」
Kili opened her mouth with an anguished expression, but Vritra fixed her gaze on her and said this.
「Even so, I decided to prioritize the planet's future. That is the pride of the previous me who risked her whole existence to protect Gaia──it's not something that I can't surrender.」
Vritra openly declared so with her head held high. Kili's eyes widened at that.
「I will lend my assistance until Angolmois is defeated but……even if Iris Freya expire after everything is over, I won't sacrifice the future and hand her Dark Matter. I wish to leave as much future as possible for this Gaia no matter what I have to do for that.」
Kili got absentminded after Vritra expressed her feeling toward her head-on, but after a while her shoulders shook and she squeezed out some words from her mouth.
「If you have that kind of resolve……then why, did you "pity" me just now? That doesn't make sense.」
Vritra's expression slackened hearing that. She smiled wryly.
「Just for an instant──I thought, that if it's thee……then perhaps it's fine to entrust everything to thee.」
「Eh……?」
It was an unexpected answer for Kili. She stared at Vritra's face open mouthed.
「I live with fixation toward the future. By no means I'm thinking that this way of living is absolute justice. Far from that……I have apprehensions about it. That perhaps, this way of living might turn me into something like Angolmois one day.」
Vritra talked with a faraway look.
「One day Gaia's lifespan will run out……at that time, I won't give up protecting this world, unable to accept the end, struggle──and be reduced into a monster who is unable to accept its demise……I have such premonition. Perhaps Angolmois at the day of yore was very similar with me.」
「Okaa-sama……」
Vritra smiled at the bewildered Kili. She urged Ren to let go of her hand.
「Therefore, it might also not be a mistake to entrust the rest to thee. However I have no intention to entrust it to thee if thou are unable to kill me. I shall persist with my determination. That's──everything I have to say.」
After saying that, Vritra shook off Ren's hand and turned her back on us. Ren also didn't try to hold back Vritra any further.
「That's unfair……Okaa-sama.」

Kili clenched both her hands and muttered in frustration. Vritra was about to keep walking away without looking back, but Iris gasped and came to her senses before she raised her voice.
「Wait, Vritra-chan!」
Iris hurriedly ran toward Vritra and hugged her.
「O-oi, what are thou doing!」
「You see, today everyone is gathering to sleep in Mononobe's room! Vritra-chan is going to sleep in my bed!」
Iris lifted up the bewildered Vritra and returned back to Naglfar.
「Oi! I'm not agreeing to that request! Don't decide my sleeping place as thou please!」
「It's fine, it's finee. Ah, but Vritra-chan might be able to sleep together with Mononobe if you win the game you know? I'm jealous……」
Vritra protested, but Iris responded to her with her own pace.
She must be thinking that Vritra would spend tonight alone if we left her as it was.
Then Ren pulled Kili's hand while returning to me.
「Onii-chan, with me. Let's return quickly.」
「O-ou.」
I nodded, but Kili couldn't keep up with the talk.
「H-hey, just what are you all talking about!?」
Kili asked while being pulled by Ren.
「Even if you ask me that—it's a game talk I guess.」
I answered like that after pondering for a bit. Kili frowned.
「I don't get it at all.」
「Well……you will get it when we return.」
We dragged the bewildered Kili and walked under the night that would continue to tomorrow.

Chapter 4 – Rainbow Colored Piece

Part 1

「……I don’t feel like sleeping in the same room with Okaa-sama though.」
Kili in her comfortable clothing muttered her grumbling while laying out the futon that she brought from the neighboring room between the two bunk beds.
The cabin had two bunk beds, but the space was insufficient even if each bed was used by two people.
「But, you are still preparing properly despite your grumbling.」
「I’m surprised. Her bed making is unexpectedly tidy.」
Firill and Mitsuki teased from above a bunk bed. Kili frowned sullenly at them.
「I just don’t want you all to monopolize Yuu. Good grief……why can’t I be in the same bed with Yuu.」
Kili glared resentfully at me who was at the lower part of a bunk bed.
Beside me Ren who had changed into her pajama was already slipping under the blanket.
「Onii-chan’s side, is mine. Kili lost the game.」
Ren talked back to Kili with only the upper half of her face peeking out from under the blanket.
Then Ariella who ended up sleeping beside Kili backed up Ren.
「That’s right. Kili had also gotten a turn with the game, so don’t complain anymore.」
It was just as Ariella said, both Kili and Vritra had also challenged me with the game before this.
But this mother and daughter hadn’t reconciled at all with each other, so naturally their teamwork was bad and I survived with them practically self-destructing by themselves.
「……We would have won if only thou didn’t act unnecessarily.」
Vritra who was preparing to sleep on the upper part of bunk bed with Iris whispered a criticism.
「What did you say? It was Okaa-sama who got on my way──」
Kili glared back at Vritra. A disquieting atmosphere was starting to fill the room, but Iris hugged Vritra from behind to cut it off.
「Vritra-chan, don’t fight anymore. Let’s rest together with me okay~」
「O-oi, stop it. Besides, there is no reason for thee to bother with me. Rather it’s only natural for thee to feel angrier at me than my daughter──」

Vritra kicked around, but Iris paid it no mind and dragged her under the blanket.
□I’m not angry at all you know~. Or rather Vritra-chan is my life savior who has saved me……I need to thank you a lot for that. That’s why let me hug you!□
□It’s stuffy! Don’t cling on me!□

The two made a ruckus above.
Lisa looked up at the two of them from the bed below and smiled wryly.
「Iris-san never changed. Somehow it makes me think that my worry for her is unfounded.」
Then Tia who was on the same bed with Lisa also nodded deeply.
「It surely will be fine. If we can borrow the strength of the people all over the world, there will be enough “light source” to illuminate Angolmois!」
There was weight in those words seeing that they came from Tia who possessed Yggdrasil’s calculation ability. I also nodded.
「Yeah──we absolutely will make it work somehow.」
I muttered that to ascertain our objective.
There the cabin’s door opened and Jeanne entered wearing white pajama.
「Jeanne, how is Shion doing?」
Jeanne smiled softly when I asked her that.
「Shinomiya-sensei is sleeping together with her. The two of them are sound asleep. Tomorrow──I’ll do my best……so that Shion can wake up healthily.」
Jeanne replied with a determined voice. I also smiled back at her.
「I see, then there is no worry. Tomorrow let’s defeat Angolmois and say good morning to Shion.」
「──Yes.」
Jeanne replied with a strong tone.
「Nii-san, everyone……let’s save Shion-san and Miyako, no matter what.」
Everyone nodded at Mitsuki’s declaration.
Because the futon that was laid out between the beds had bigger space, Jeanne slept together with Kili and Ariella there.
Mitsuki confirmed that everyone had entered the bed and reached out to the lamp’s switch from her bed.
「Then I’ll turn off the light──sleep well.」
Click There was the button’s sound and the room turned dark.
The room was being illuminated only by the faint light of the stars from the window.
──Unexpectedly everyone fell asleep immediately.
There were this many people here, so I had readied myself for another commotion to rise, but if it was like this then I felt like I’d be able to sleep immediately.
Everyone too must be feeling the weight of the battle tomorrow.
「Then, Ren. Let’s sleep.」
「……Nn」
Ren nodded a bit shyly when I entered under the blanket.

And then she hesitatingly grasped my arm under the blanket. When I looked at Ren, she was staring still at me without closing her eyes.
「Thanks──for before this. It was a great help how you stopped Kili and Vritra's quarrel.」
She seemed a bit nervous, so I tried talking to her with a low voice.
「Nn……I just, said what I want to say.」
「Even so, I think that what you did is amazing. Surely those two are also thankful to you.」
I whispered into Ren's ear so Kili and Vritra couldn't hear. I gently caressed her fluffy red hair.
「Nnu……」
Ren's cheeks reddened. Even so she also closed her eyes with a look of comfort.
「Onii-chan's scent……a lot.」
Ren rubbed her forehead on my forehead like what she did in the game before this.
「Ah, perhaps I should take shower again before sleeping?」
Perhaps I had gotten a little sweaty again from playing the game and intermediating the mother-daughter quarrel.
That was what I thought, but Ren shook her head.
「Nn. It's fine like this……this is, better.」
「Well, if Ren say that……」
I felt a bit relieved. Ren whispered with a very small voice.
「……Nn. I like, Onii-chan's smell. Onii-chan's hand too……I love it.」
Ren's words that sounded like a confession made my heart skipped a beat.
「That's why, pet me……more.」
「──Got it.」
I continued combing her hair with my fingers. Strength left Ren's body and she smiled with a comforted look.
「……Onii-chan, good night.」
「Yeah, good night.」
I responded with a smile and slowed my caressing on her hair.
After that Ren's breathing quickly turned peaceful.
I also closed my eyes to sleep and yielded my consciousness to my sleepiness.
Perhaps because I used Ether Wind a lot at Atlantis continent, it felt like fatigue had accumulated in my mind. Also, the damage from getting shot with Noa Replica by Major Loki also still affected me.
My body sought rest and I was sure that I could fall asleep right away.
However just as my consciousness was about to fall into the abyss of sleep, the bed above made a creaking sound.
──What?
It felt bothersome to open my eyes, so I followed the action of that person with my hearing.

The bed above Ren and me should be used by Mitsuki and Firill. And so it must be one of them making this sound.
I was worried whether Kili and others who were sleeping on the floor would get stepped on, but that person was going out of the room quietly.
I thought that she might be going to toilet, so I prepared myself to fall asleep once more.
However I heard the sound of the cabin's door opened again faster than I thought.
—She is already back?
I could hear faint footstep stepping on futon before it stopped beside the bed.
I thought that the person would climb the ladder and returned to her bed above, but an unexpected situation occurred there.
The bed creaked from a weight getting on it. My blanket was slightly pulled away. And then someone's presence came to my left side—the opposite side of where Ren was sleeping.
I could hear the sound of stifled breathing. Body warmth was transmitted through the blanket.
「Tsu—」
As expected I couldn't possibly just fall asleep in this situation. I opened my eyes.
Then surprisingly nearby……there was Firill's bashful face there. She was at a distance where our nose tip almost touched.
「O-oi, Firill—just what are you doing here?」
「……Eh? Huh? Mononobe-kun? This is strangee……looks like I got into the wrong bed because I was half asleep.」
When I asked her anxiously, Firill lowered her voice and made a fake excuse.
「Liar, you did it on purpose.」
「Ehe」
「Don't just dodge the matter.」
Firill smiled mischievously. I poked her forehead with my finger, but for some reason she narrowed her eyes happily.
「Fufu, somehow the exchange just now sounded like married couple's lines.」
Her expression made my heart skipped a beat, but I pulled myself together and said to her.
「Get back to your own bed quickly. It will cause a ruckus if we are found out in this position.」
「Eee……I want to stay here for a bit more. It wasn't the situation for that yesterday because of Mitsuki's matter so……tonight, umm……I want to do that.」
Firill's face reddened for some reason. She fidgeted while staring at me with an upward gaze.
「That?」

When I asked her what she meant, Firill put her hands around her mouth and whispered with even smaller voice.
「—Wedding night.」
「Wha-……」
I almost talked loudly and covered my own mouth.
Firill brought her face closer to me and pouted.
「It's an agreement that is limited to within Erlia Principality only,m but I still have married with Mononobe-kun you know? You……haven't forgotten about that right?」
「Something like that……there is no way I can forget it. But, I didn't know that it was a wedding ceremony—」
I nodded while also objecting.
When we were on the way toward the decisive battle against Bahamut, as we entered the territorial airspace of Erlia Principality, Firill demanded to me to kiss the back of her hand.
I was also in the wrong because I didn't think too deeply about that demand and responded to it because I wanted to grant Firill's wish but—it seemed to be the royalty's marriage ritual in Erlia Principality.
「But, it doesn't change the fact that you have done it right?」
「Uu……」
「Ufufu, it's fait accompli~」
「D-don't use strange way to describe it.」
I panicked, but Firill put her finger on my lips and smiled.
「Mononobe-kun, you're loud. If you aren't quiet……we will be seen. As expected……I'll be embarrassed if everyone see me in this outfit.」
There I noticed that Firill wasn't in her pajama.
She was wearing a negligee with thinner fabric that looked transparent. It looked very high class but with very bold design despite that.
「Mononobe-kun……do you want to see more?」
Seeing my reaction, Firill said that while slightly rolling up the blanket.
「Wha—」
Because the negligee was really thin, the bra covering her voluptuous twin hills was clearly visible.
So she went out of the cabin just now to change into this negligee. The calm part of my head thought that but—my eyes couldn't look away from the valley of her breasts.
「Usually I'm not wearing underwear when sleeping but……tonight is special. It's victory underwear to use against Mononobe-kun—no, it's sure win instant kill underwear.」
Firill used her breasts to appeal at me even while she was turning bright red. She grasped my hand under the blanket.
My fingertips that got touched—felt hot.
Firill's hands were damp with sweat. Our skins stuck on each other when she strongly held my hand. I hallucinated that the boundary of our bodies was melting to each other.

「F-Firill?」
When I called out her name with a shrill voice, her body trembled slightly.
She must be nervous.
However she didn't avert her gaze and repeatedly inhaled and exhaled with heat in her breathing.
Her breath that was mixed with her warmth and moisture caressed my nose tip and lips.
Even though our lips didn't touch directly, it made me felt like I was getting kissed.
Thump, thump The sound of my own heartbeat reverberated inside my ears.
Our hands that held each other under the blanket couldn't let go of each other anymore as though they had been fused together.
Our fingers entangled together in the wish of obtaining a more solid connection.
「You can……touch if you want. Tonight……is an exception. Because……it's the wedding night, of Mononobe-kun and me.」

She stared at me with moist eyes. The center of my brain heated up and my mind felt hazy.
My free arm──my hand that still wasn't connected with Firill followed the push of my instinct to reach out toward her.
「Yes, just like that……it's fine, even if you do it roughly.」
Guided by Firill's sweet words, my hand approached her twin hills.
Her breasts slightly moved up and down from her breathing.
My fingertip touched the luscious white bulges that pushed up the thin fabric. That softness washed away any unnecessary thought from inside my brain──.
──*Creak*…….
However I heard a faint creaking sound of the bed at that timing.
……Hm?
Next I saw something moving at the corner of my eye.
I instantly returned to my senses as though cold water had been poured on me.
I got a terribly bad premonition.
When I fearfully turned my gaze over there, there was something black dangling down from the bed above──.
.
「Nii-san, Firill-san──what is the meaning of this wedding night thing?」
.
And then a low threatening voice entered our ears.
I realized. Dangling down from above the bed was a long black hair.
Mitsuki was leaning forward from the bed above and peeking at us upside down with a twitching smile.
Even Firill who had her back turned on that sight jerked. Her shoulders shook and she looked back with a tense expression.
「E-err……eh? Mitsuki? How strange~……it looks like I entered the wrong bed.」
Firill made the same excuse like before, but Mitsuki glared at Firill with half-opened eyes.
「It's pointless even if you play stupid. You have been talking with Nii-san since some time ago. I couldn't hear everything that was said but……I definitely heard the words wedding night uttered without a doubt.」
「That's, it's, I didn't say wedding night, it's wedding……welding……ni, knight……y-yes, welding knight, we talked about a knight who has welding job.」

Firill made an explanation that was too forced, but this time another voice came from the bed below—Kili who should be sleeping on the futon that was laid on the floor showed her face.
「No, I definitely heard it too. I realized from the start that you sneaked into Yuu's bed so I wanted to drag you out right away but……I got curious and listened in. After that I even heard some words like—did it, or fait accompli.」
Next Lisa who was sleeping at the opposite bed sprang up.
「W-what do you mean did it!?」
In addition even Tia got up while rubbing her eyes.
「Yuu……what is fait accompli?」
It seemed that Ren was the only one who was completely asleep. Everyone got up one after another.
「Mononobe-kun—I hope you can tell us about it in full detail.」
Ariella was staring at me with a reproachful gaze.
「C-captain is already married!?」
Jeanne pressed me with that question while hugging her pillow. Then Iris also asked me anxiously from the opposite upper bed.
「Mononobe……is Firill-chan actually your number one?」
「……Thou all, so noisy. I'm sleepy here so shut up.」
Vritra's grumbling could also be heard, but nobody paid her any mind and they demanded explanation from Firill and me.
「Onii-chan……? What's the matter?」
Even Ren woke up from the alarming atmosphere. I was surrounded on all sides. Firill looked toward me with a gaze that asked for help. I put my hand on her shoulder and opened my mouth.
「Firill asked me to keep it as a secret between the two of us, but it can't be helped if it's like this. I'll explain it truthfully okay?」
「Uu……as I thought, perhaps I should wait until late at night. I got too impatient and blundered……it's my fault, so it's fine if you stop keeping it a secret.」
Firill hung her head down in dejection. With her agreement, I explained the situation to everyone.
Everyone was dumbfounded hearing that we held a marriage ritual at the sky above Erlia Principality.
However Mitsuki who turned around and came down from above the bed gazed at me in exasperation.
「Good grief—you are too simple Nii-san. There is no way something like that can become an official marriage process. You were completely played by Firill-san.」
Mitsuki said that and moved her gaze to Firill.
「Firill-san, I think that normally such important ceremony will need a witness to attend it though.」
「C-certainly it needs a royalty to witness the proceeding but……I'm a princess so—」

Firill replied with a slightly anxious look. Mitsuki pressed her further.
「I never heard any precedent of the person doing the marrying also doubling as the witness. That's why your marriage with Nii-san is also invalid! Isn't that right?」
「Uu……」
Firill was cornered, but there was a strong light of willpower in her eyes.
「……It's not invalid. That was my wedding ceremony with Mononobe-kun. Mononobe-kun is already my prince now!」
Firill childishly said that and hugged my arm.
Her thin negligee transmitted her breast's softness and warmth directly to me. It made my heartbeat rose regardless of my will.
「O-oi, Firill――」
Firill tightened her hold on my arm. She wouldn't let go of the flustered me and looked around at everyone.
「I'm serious with what I said before okay.」
「Before?」
Mitsuki frowned. Firill nodded and continued speaking.
「Same sex marriage is recognized in Erlia Principality, in addition there is an old system where royalty can practice polygamy. I'll use that to marry everyone. With that everyone will be able to become Mononobe-kun's family. I think that this is the only way where everyone can become happy with the "correct proceedings".」
From her voice we could clearly feel that she wasn't joking, but genuinely serious.
Everyone was overwhelmed by her drive, even so Mitsuki spoke back.
「You mean that talk……we also said before, with that way Firill-san will become the only one who is married with Nii-san isn't it?」
Firill yielded against this argument before, but this time she didn't back down.
「So what? I'm serious, and I won't give up. I swear that after Mononobe-kun, I'll capture Mitsuki and others too and add everyone into my harem! That's my future design!」
Firill got completely defiant and smiled brazenly at everyone.
「Wha……y-you're going to capture us……」
Mitsuki's face turned red from that unexpected words and drew back.
Lisa also blushed and asked Firill.
「Wait a second Firill-san! Do you realize the meaning of what you are saying?」
Firill calmly nodded and made a grabby motion with her fingers.
「Of course. I'll also make Lisa's big and soft breasts into mine.」
Firill grinned obscenely. I sighed seeing that.
「――Firill, you're forcing yourself too much. It seems that you're serious you're your harem plan, even so you are unable to look at your friend in that light right?」
I put my hand on Firill's head consolingly and shook her shoulder a little.

I knew. Firill was acting boldly, but she was surprisingly a timid person at heart. Because of that she always ran wild like this when cornered.
「M-Mononobe-kun……don't do that. I have to push on with the momentum right now……」
Firill looked up at me in protest because I weakened her vigor.
「No, you will just complicate things needlessly if you rush on things like this.」
I said that to calm down Firill.
It was then, Kili seemed to think of something and raised her voice.
「Ah――――I just realize, about her plan……if it's only until the middle then perhaps it's quite a good plan.」
「Kili-chan?」
Kili smiled wryly after the gazes of Iris and others were gathered on her.
「To be honest, I don't care at all with something like the formal proceedings. As long as Yuu doesn't reject me with a reason like because "he has all of you", I'll tolerate the existences of his other "mates". But all of you want something――a proof to display your deep relationship with Yuu right?」
Everyone went red from Kili's question. Firill and Mitsuki hesitatingly nodded at her.
「Then, Yuu can just marry with that princess. If he does that then Yuu will be a prince, a part of the royal family. At that point, won't Yuu also get the right to do polygamy?」
「Ah」
Firill let out a stupid voice when she heard Kili's suggestion.
「All of you will be satisfied if you can marry with Yuu himself right? With this then everyone will all live happily ever after.」
Kili clapped her hands with an indifferent expression.
It seemed that she genuinely didn't feel any worth from marriage system.
「Marriage with Mononobe……」
Iris muttered with a reddening expression. Everyone also fell silent.
「Kuu……」
I heard the sound of someone sleeping alone. This must be Vritra's voice.
But Mitsuki came back to her senses earlier than anyone and yelled loudly.
「A-as expected that's no good! In that case Nii-san will marry with Firill-san first and they will have their we, w-we, wedding night……or rather I have my own situation and dream……if possible, I want Nii-san and me together in my house――」
Mitsuki went bright red and shut her mouth. Lisa also raised her voice next after her.
「I too have various future designs of my own. If I inherited my parents' company, then……I'll be troubled if Mononobe Yuu doesn't help me out.」
Lisa sent glances at me. Kili shrugged her shoulders at her.

「You two are also really selfish huh. Well, just arrange everything for that as you please. But──I won't just stay quiet if you try to take away Yuu before my eyes.」
Kili gave that warning before she yawned widely and crawled under her blanket.
Jeanne made an exasperated look seeing that.
「Which one is being selfish here……ah, as for me, I'll follow captain anywhere anytime no matter what, so I'm fine no matter where captain goes to!」
Jeanne also returned to sleep after announcing that. Ariella smiled wryly while turning a serious gaze toward me.
「You'll completely ignore Mononobe-kun's circumstance if you do that, so perhaps Jeanne is the most selfish one here……well but, I'm also planning to have Mononobe-kun take responsibility for me properly so I won't compromise you know? Ren is also the same right?」
Ren who was addressed by Ariella rubbed her eyes sleepily while nodding.
「Nn……Onii-chan is, my Onii-chan forever.」
And then she collapsed on the bed and began to breathe rhythmically. It seemed that she was at her limit already.
Mitsuki sighed seeing that and put her foot on the bed's ladder.
「I think this matter cannot be concluded in just a single day, so let's go to sleep already for tonight. Firill-san──please separate from Nii-san already.」
Firill hurriedly nodded when Mitsuki glared fiercely at her. She then followed Mitsuki to return to the bed above.
「……Mononobe-kun, let's redo our wedding night again after we defeat Angolmois.」
However she whispered that to me at the end. Her bashful expression was seared into my mind.
「Wait a second Firill-san! I can hear you!」
Lisa raised her voice chidingly, but Firill only replied 「Good night~」 and went to sleep.
「Good grief, Firill-san is always……oh, Tia-san, what's the matter?」
Lisa folded her arms angrily, but then she noticed Tia strangely fidgeting.
「……Umm, Tia want to go to toilet. But the corridor is dark, so can Lisa also──」
「Ah, in that case I'll go with you.」
I immediately volunteered when hearing Tia's words.
Somehow the matter of marriage with Firill ended up unsettled, but the room's atmosphere was still a bit tense.
That was why I wanted to go outside and calmed myself. Surely it would also be easier for Mitsuki and others to fall asleep if I left for a moment.
「Tia will feel safe if Yuu also come together!」
Tia rejoiced. Lisa smiled seeing that.
「Then, I'll leave Tia-san in your care.」
「Yeah, roger.」

I took responsibility for Tia and got out to Naglfar's dark corridor.
「It's a bit cold……」
Tia in her pajama grabbed my hand and leaned on me.
The toilet of this sector was at the end of the corridor. I pulled Tia's hand and started walking in small stride.
Our footsteps echoed in the corridor.
I could hear heavy bass sound faintly from afar. It must be coming from the resupply and maintenance of Naglfar.
When I turned my attention there, I felt Tia putting a bit more strength into her grasp on my hand.
I turned down my gaze. I found Tia's large eyes looking up to me there.
「What's wrong?」
She looked like she wanted to say something. I tried asking her with a casual tone.
「……Umm, Yuu.」
Tia opened her mouth after staying silent for a bit.
「Yeah.」
I responded shortly to urge her to continue.
「Err, you see, Tia……isn't worried at all, about this future matter thing.」
Then Tia expressed her opinion at me with a very serious expression.
──Future.
Most likely this was about the conversation in the cabin just now.
「Tia's number one is Yuu, but Tia also love everyone. Firill too──and everyone else too……surely even Kili is feeling the same. That's why everyone will do their best to make their dream come true……and with that everyone should be able to become happy.」
Tia said that and stared still at me.
「Yeah──I also want to make everyone happy. Due to becoming my mate or betraying the army……because they got involved with me, everyone had to walk a difficult path. But, that's exactly why……at the end of their path──I absolutely won't let them find unhappiness waiting for them.」
I spoke of my feeling to ascertain my resolve once more.
But……I was really anxious, because the result of me trying to do just that was Mitsuki running away.
Something like that was just a fairy tale, an idealistic thought. There was no way a happiness that everyone could agree with and accept existed. A weak part inside my heart was whispering that to me.
I was also thinking that even if everyone compromised to find a common ground that all of them could accept to some degree, wouldn't that be the result of all of them abandoning their greatest wish?
I imagined the scene of everyone holding back and enduring something while putting on a smile on the surface.
In that scene, there were everyone and me──trying to convince ourselves that this compromise was right, that this was our happiness.

Such scene, I found it extremely revolting. That scene was also really pitiful and sad.
If that was the kind of future that was waiting for us ahead of this……that would mean that I was walking through the wrong path.
But—.
「Yes, Tia believe in Yuu. When Tia grow up and can marry, Yuu will surely make Tia your wife properly!」
Tia's innocent voice entered my ear. Her words were filled with trust and deep affection.
I gulped when I saw Tia's eyes sparkling bright in expectation.
Tia had been like this the whole time since we were reunited at Midgard.
She never wavered at the slightest.
This radiance never dulled even once.
This was the dream that Tia held, her biggest wish.
The shape of her happiness that she kept showing and demanded from me over and over.
Tia would never discard her greatest wish no matter what happened. I was convinced that she absolutely wouldn't give up on it.
—I understood. That this wish was something that I absolutely had to make come true.
No, it wasn't that I had to. I wanted to……I myself wished to make Tia happy.
And then I remembered. Just now both Mitsuki and Lisa also objected at Firill's plan.
The others were also not the type of people who would give up on their greatest wish no matter what.
Surely it would be impossible for them to compromise.
Because of that the path ahead from here would be hopelessly severe. In the future there would definitely be clashes between everyone.
But most likely all of them wouldn't give up.
They wouldn't give up in making their greatest wish came true—in everyone becoming happy.
—Then, perhaps things would work out somehow.
「Yeah……it might take time but, wait for me.」
I nodded and used my empty hand that wasn't holding Tia's hand to caress her head.
I patted her gently and thoroughly with my gratitude for her in this gesture.
Because I could notice something important thanks to Tia.
「Ehehe……it's ticklish.」
Tia squinted happily and clung on me.

It made it a bit hard to walk, but the path was narrow anyway, so we continued walking like that slowly.
I sent off Tia after we arrived at the toilet and waited at a slight distance away from the entrance.
「Yuu~……Tia is finished」
Tia returned after a while. She was blinking sleepily.
It seemed that her sleepiness returned after she finished her business.
It was dangerous the way she walked unsteadily, so I crouched and offered her my back.
「Come on, hold on.」
「……Thank you.」
Tia put her hands around my neck and placed herself on my back.
「I'll bring you until the room, so you can sleep already.」
I carried her on my back and said that while returning to the cabin.
「Yep……good night.」
Tia said that and strength left her body. She fell asleep immediately. I carried her while doing my best to walk in a way that didn't shake her body.
Then I felt someone approaching from the front.
There were footsteps with slightly different rhythm. They belonged to two people—.
I stopped walking and focused my eyes.
It was Mitsuki and Iris in their pajama who appeared from the dark corridor ahead.
「Eh, are you two going to toilet too?」
Mitsuki made a sullen expression when I asked.
「Nii-san—it's a breach of manner asking a girl something like that. Please guess it yourself without asking anything. Well, this time we aren't going to toilet so I shall give you a pass.」
「If you aren't going to toilet.……then what are you doing?」
I tilted my head because I didn't understand their reason for going out of the room. Then Mitsuki grabbed Iris's arm and pulled her to in front of me.
「Geez Mitsuki-chan—I'm telling you I'm fine you know」
Iris looked slightly bewildered. However Mitsuki paid her no mind and pushed her back.
「I had talked a bit with Firill-san after that, about why she took such bold action even though everyone is inside the same room. And then Firill-san said this—because she might regret it if she doesn't do it now.」
Mitsuki's eyes were serious.
I fixed Tia's position on my back while listening to her words seriously.

「When I heard that I thought. Right now it's Iris-san and Nii-san who really should take such action……even if Iris-san's burden will be reduced thanks to headmaster, it doesn't change the fact that the risk for Iris-san is the biggest. Nii-san's role to directly confront Angolmois is also really dangerous. That's why――」
「Wait, Mitsuki-chan! I'm really fine! I believe that tomorrow everything will go well. Mononobe absolutely won't lose against the like of Angolmois!」
Iris waved her hand while cutting off Mitsuki.
However Mitsuki shook her head with a stiff expression.
「I too naturally believe that we will win. However despite that, not thinking the worst case is simply being lazy and running away from reality. There is nothing absolute in this world――perhaps something outside our expectation will occur. That's why, so that we won't regret it later……I think that Iris-san has to talk properly with Nii-san.」
「Mitsuki-chan……」
Iris looked toward me with a troubled look. She was puzzled of what to say to convince Mitsuki.
「Nii-san, I'll take Tia-san back, so please spend time with Iris-san alone. That's……it might not be my place to say this after I got in the way of Firill-san's night visit but……I won't be angry no matter what you do with Iris-san just for tonight.」
Mitsuki clenched her fist tightly and looked down to hide her agonized expression.
It was clear that she was really forcing herself. I felt that this wasn't a compromise for Mitsuki, but something that came from her sense of responsibility.
Surely her guilt from running away alone and troubling everyone was pushing her to do this.
That was why……she couldn't see the important thing.
.
「――Mitsuki, look over here.」
.
「Nii-san……?」
I sighed and made Mitsuki looked up.
I was already leaning forward because I was carrying Tia on my back, so I brought my face closer to her from there.
「Eh――」
Mitsuki blushed and her eyes opened wide.
But most likely my action was outside of Mitsuki's expectation.
They touched――or rather they collided, our foreheads.
My hands were full because I was carrying Tia. My only option was this.
「Auh」
Mitsuki pressed her hands on her forehead due to that light headbutt. She glared at me. It was a clash between two fellow hardheaded people, so it should be really hurt.

「N-Nii-san, what are you doing!?」
「That's because Mitsuki said something stupid.」
I stared down fixedly on Mitsuki from real close. She puffed up her cheeks in dissatisfaction.
「I'm stupid──t-that's cruel. I just want Nii-san and Iris-san to spend an important time together……」
Apparently Mitsuki still misunderstood something. She hadn't gotten it yet. I sighed exaggeratedly.
「I'm saying, why are you only doing this for Iris and me.」
「Eh? Because both of you will shoulder the most dangerous roles……」
I smiled wryly at Mitsuki's answer.
「Certainly──at the battle tomorrow, the fate of Iris and me will be the most uncertain. Spending time right now so that we will leave no regret is also a correct choice.」
「Then──」
「But, what Iris and I want ahead of this battle isn't a future for just both of us.」
I cut off Mitsuki's argument and declared that.
When I turned my gaze at Iris beside Mitsuki, she responded with a strong nod.
「Yep, it's just as Mononobe say. You see, I have tried imagining a lot…… about what will happen after this, about the future……and then, I see everyone in there. Mononobe is there, and Mitsuki-chan too, and Tia-chan……everyone in Brunhilde class is all there. That's why, I think that will be the happiest future for me. I'm going to fight with my all because I want to arrive there!」
Iris puffed out her chest and stared straight into Mitsuki's eyes while expressing her feeling toward the battle tomorrow.
「Iris-san……」
Mitsuki was dumbfounded. I kindly talked to her.
「Mitsuki, this is already right. Getting together with everyone, playing, spending the night together──there is no better way to use our time than this. No matter what happen tomorrow……I won't regret of what we are doing tonight.」
「Nii-san……」
Mitsuki stared alternately at Iris and me before her shoulders slumped down.
「In other words──I was being a misunderstanding busybody then.」
「So you finally get it.」
When I said that teasingly, Mitsuki glared at me──before she hung her head down immediately.
「……I kept running wild by myself. I haven't learned my lesson at all.」
「You have been like this from the start, you would rush in a straight line when you get obsessed with something. It won't be fixed that easily.」
「Uu……I think it will be better if Nii-san console me a bit more there.」

Mitsuki looked resentfully at me. I returned a wry smile at her.
「I'm always at the scolded side usually, so it make me want to get a bit of payback at this kind of time.」
「……Nii-san you meanie.」
Mitsuki puffed out her cheek.
Then a laughter came from the side.
「Fufu, Mononobe and Mitsuki-chan's talk is always funny! It's really refreshing to watch because both of you will show faces that you usually never show.」
Iris laughed in delight while hugging Mitsuki.
「You know, I──love Mitsuki-chan when you are together with Mononobe. What's more, I also love Mononobe when he is together with Mitsuki-chan!」
「W-wait a second, Iris-san?」
Iris rubbed her cheek on the flustered Mitsuki and continued her words.
「I can't say it well but, looking at you two makes me think that this is what it means to have fun by being together! That's why, let's go back to our room quickly!」
「……I get it already so please don't pull me like that!」
Mitsuki nodded in resignation and looked at me.
「Nii-san, this is fine isn't it?」
「Yeah.」
I nodded back strongly. Mitsuki smiled in relieve seeing that and returned to the cabin with Iris.
I also carried the sleeping Tia on my back and followed the two.
In order to spend the same might with my important people.
Everyone didn't have the same dream in their mind by any means…… everyone's wish was all over the place and they might clash with each other, but──.
But, each one's──colorful wish, the fragments of them should interlace with each other and formed a future where everyone could smile.
I couldn't even imagine what kind of color would be formed from that.
No, surely it wouldn't have just one color. I think that there would be many colors included in it.
That was why──perhaps, the color would be rainbow.
I was convinced when I returned to the cabin.
That what was here right now, was a fragment of the rainbow color that would be depicted one day.
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Part 2

That siren—it rang out earlier than the alarm that I set in my phone. It woke up all of us who slept in the same room.
Uuuuuuuuuuuuu———!
「Tsu……what is—」
I was instantly conscious and moved aside my blanket while getting up. I checked the situation.
「It's……an alarm?」
Lisa was making a confused look at the other bed.
「Sleepy……」
Tia was rubbing her eyes while still looking sleepy.
「Nnu……」
Ren who was sleeping beside me was also still looking half asleep.
「Captain, there is no abnormality from what is visible outside the window.」
Jeanne quickly ran toward the cabin's window and checked outside. Kili who got stepped on during her rush raised her voice 「What are you doing!」 angrily.
「This doesn't seem like a summon for briefing……we should have two more hours for that.」
Ariella checked the time and muttered in puzzlement.
「Everyone, please calm down. For now let's go to where Shinomiya-sensei—」
Mitsuki's voice came from the bed above, but the ship's internal broadcast interrupted her.
「—Emergency. A giant object is confirmed heading toward this island. The object is apparently moving inside the sea. Contact will happen in one more hour.」
Major Loki's voice explained the situation concisely. Next Atla's voice also came out.
「There will be a briefing in the bridge at ten more minutes! Brunhilde class's members are to dress themselves and gather there!」
The broadcast cut off with a sound *pshew* after telling us the message.
「I wonder what is this giant object……」
Firill spoke uneasily. Vritra jumped down from the other upper bed.
Kili got stepped on again. She shouted 「What are you doing!」 again, but Vritra paid her no mind and spoke.

「It must be Angolmois's work. Looks like it's not so easy of an opponent that things can progress as we expected.」
Hearing that, Iris looked down from the bed above at Vritra who was standing on Kili and asked with a stiff voice.
「Then, the battle is going to start already after this?」
「That's how it will be.」
Vritra nodded.
The cabin fell silent instantly, but Mitsuki immediately raised her voice.
「Everyone, quickly return to your own room and prepare!」
Everyone returned to their senses from the order of the dragon extermination team's leader and hurriedly ran out of my room.
I also took off my shirt to prepare myself but──I suddenly realized that Vritra was still staying behind alone in my room.
「You should quickly go change too Vritra, otherwise you will be late.」
It was Vritra, so I guess I didn't really need to feel bothered. I continued changing my clothes while urging her to do the same.
However Vritra didn't start moving and approached me who was putting in my arm through my shirt's sleeve.
「There is something that I have to do before that. About what I mentioned yesterday──the method for thee to become the same kind like Angolmois.」
「Come to think of it, you said something about making use of a function of"D". Will it take time to prepare that?」
It seemed to be an important talk, so I stopped tying my uniform's necktie and turned toward Vritra.
「That was what I said at that time, but that description isn't accurate. My daughter would get noisy if I said the truth after all, so I lied a little.」
「Lie……that doesn't sound good.」
I frowned and asked Vritra to continue with my gaze.
「In the first place a transformation to the same kind isn't something that can be caused intentionally. Before this I failed when I tried to offer my daughter to Hraesvelgr. Thou also know about that.」
The incident that happened at Erlia Principality flashed in my mind.
Kili got her dragon crest forcefully rewritten by Vritra and entered a state where Hraesvelgr imprinted on her. She then asked us for help.
However when Hraesvelgr attacked, she didn't choose Kili but imprinted at Firill instead.
The figure of Kili standing dumbfounded when the color change of her dragon crest vanished had been seared in my memory.
「Yeah──I saw it happened right before my eyes. Then, is it impossible for me to become the same thing like Angolmois?」
Then we would have to rethink the strategy from zero.
However Vritra shook her head at the flustered me.
「Don't jump to the wrong conclusion. If we can ascertain the true body of Angolmois, creating a vessel that imitate its shape will be easy. Code Lost can activate its effect as long as the opponent has "human shape". Then it

will be enough to simply change thy outer appearance. Thou can just use biological conversion to expand thy biological function and clad thyself in a veil of flesh.」
「Eh? Wait a second. The way you said it, it sounds like I'll be the one doing the biological conversion myself instead of Vritra.」
Not only I was unable to do biological conversion, the amount of Dark Matter I could produce was also considerably fewer than other "D". A feat that Vritra described was impossible for me.
「Until the completion of the operation, I have a role to assist Iris Freya as much as possible. I can't accompany thee in charging to Angolmois's true body. Therefore──I shall lend thee a part of the true seventh authority. Now, get on your knee.」
Vritra declared solemnly and ordered me.
「……What are you going to do?」
I got on my knee even while feeling suspicious. The height of my gaze became almost the same with Vritra.
Then her face reddened for some reason and she pressed her hand on her left chest in pain.
「I spent the night adjusting this vessel but……to think that it would be this painful.」
「Vritra, are you alright?」
I called at her because her state seemed abnormal.
「I'm fine. This is the proof that my adjustment went well. Then the rest depend on thee──」
Vritra said that and put her hands around my neck awkwardly. Her childish face that was similar to Kili approached me.
「──Eh?」
Small and soft lips touched my mouth while I was bewildered.
──*Thump*
A small pain ran through my left hand in that moment. Then it was followed by a heat slightly later.
「W-what are──」
I returned to my senses and tear off Vritra from me. She was staring at me with a flushed face with a vacant expression.
「So this is……an exchange that is done between people with flesh body. It's my first experience but……it might become a habit.」
Vritra's red tongue licked her lips. That gesture was filled with a captivating charm that I never felt from her until now──such gesture was too unbalanced with her young appearance that it made my heartbeat quickened.
「No, that's why I'm asking you why are you doing something like that……」
「Look at thy left hand.」
I asked her reason without hiding my puzzlement. In respond Vritra told me that briefly.

The pain that I felt just now had gone, but I could feel the heat on the back of my left hand. And then what was there was—my dragon crest.
「……」
I hesitantly lifted up my left arm and dropped my gaze on the back of my hand.
There the edge of my small dragon crest was dyed black.
「There are two conditions that has to be fulfilled in order for a dragon to be able to imprint on “D”. First is a strong impulse from the dragon to desire a “mate”. Second is that there is someone with corresponding psychic waves among the “D” who are in sexually excited state. When these conditions are fulfilled, a mental link will be formed through the dragon crest.」
Vritra dispassionately explained, but I still couldn’t comprehend the situation.
「The color of the dragon crest will start to change together with the construction of the link. As time passed, the characteristic wavelength of the body will also be synchronized. Because thee and those girls already has the same form and nature as “human” from the start, this process was unnecessary and it was also easy for thy mind to synchronize.」
It was a complicated talk that my head couldn’t understand at all.
But, there was one thing that I had to ascertain no matter what. I asked my question.
「Don’t tell me……did you just imprint of me Vritra?」
I asked her with a hoarse voice. Vritra nodded to me.
「Exactly—it was difficult to fulfill the conditions I spoke to thee just now just so thee know. I adjusted my vessel to match my wavelength with thee but……in other words it means me entering a state of “getting along” with thee, of me instinctually seeking for thee……I never thought that it would make my heart to throb like this.」
Vritra pressed her chest with both her hands and sighed anxiously.
「In the shoujo manga that I borrowed from Firill Crest previously, this state was described as “love at first sight” wasn’t it?」
「L-love at first sight!?」
I raised my voice shrilly because of the extremely unexpected wording.
「In other words, the current me is desiring thee sexually. Thou too are getting sexually excited from the kiss with me. And so the conditions are fulfilled. Therefore that dragon crest is starting to change color.」
「Wha—sexually excited……」
My face heated up unconsciously.
「Well, originally the link won’t form just from temporary desire though. I forcefully managed that somehow by kissing thee directly.
Normally—according to the shoujo manga too, to say it romantically, “D” cannot be imprinted on unless they are in love.」
After saying that, Vritra looked down on the hand that she pressed on her left chest and let out a heated sigh.

「Female “D” will be in a sexually excited state constantly by falling in love and fulfill the condition to be imprinted on. In other words—it’s not a coincidence that it was only the “D” around thee who got targeted. It’s only natural for them to easily get excited because there is an opposite sex beside them.」
「Don’t tell me……」
My mind hit upon the meaning of Vritra’s words and I turned pale.
「Yes……it’s something that has passed but, thy was also responsible for why Iris Freya and the others got imprinted on. After all those girls most likely fell in love with thee.」
「Tsu……」
I was at a loss for words after that unexpected fact was thrust at me.
—Iris, Tia, and also Firill, they were targeted by dragon……because I was there……?
Vritra slightly panicked and grabbed my shoulders seeing me shaken like this.
「O-oi, if thou make that kind of face—it makes my chest tighten in my current state. Forgive me, I made fun of thee too much.」
「No, it’s true that it was all my fault……」
When I shook my head, Vritra shook my body anxiously.
「What are thou saying! I am the cause of everything! I didn’t even know that love can be this intense……this maddening, this precious. I made use of it without realizing that such feeling could exist! Even though the love of those “D” wasn’t directed toward dragon……I thought of that as mere triviality!」
I was surprised seeing Vritra giving me such follow up so desperately.
I realized that right now Vritra was really harboring affection toward me and a feeling of unable to leave her alone rose inside me.
「Yeah—I’ll stop regretting something that has come to pass. That’s why Vritra too, don’t brood too much over it. I’m already happy enough that you can understand human’s feeling.」
Vritra made a relieved expression when I smiled at her.
What she did as “Black” Vritra surpassed the category of what could be judged by human rule.
It wasn’t something that she could be responsible for or make up for.
That was why, I didn’t want to make use of her “love in first sight” state toward me to drag her to stand on the same stage as human.
Perhaps many people who had experienced dragon disaster would desire to condemn Vritra.
But I couldn’t think of that as something right.
「Thou……doesn’t hate me now?」
「Yeah.」
Vritra uneasily asked me. I answered her with a strong nod.
「Than that’s good. Good grief……this is my first time feeling a pain like this in my chest. Is this the feeling called love……I never imagined that I would

be toyed around by my feeling to this degree. No—right now isn't the time to feel shaken. Let's return to the topic.」
Vritra coughed and observed my expression while continuing.
「Let me say this first, I'm not really becoming thy mate. Right now I have this unbearable feeling to make thou mine but……I'm holding it back. To begin with, thou are Neun. With thy authority to determine the way something ought to be, thou will definitely reject transforming to the same kind as me. The change in color of thy dragon crest also won't progress any further than this.」
「Then, why did you do this?」
I also pulled myself together and asked Vritra back to learn her true intention.
「I already told thee at the start. I'm lending thee my seventh authority. It become possible to share authority with someone linked through the dragon crest. But if the dragon doesn't actively share the ability, the imprinted "D" won't be able to use it.」
Vritra said that and looked up at the bed above my bed.
They had returned to their own cabin, but previously that spot was used by Mitsuki and Firill.
「I received a report from my daughter in the past, that Mononobe Mitsuki used Anti Matter before she annihilated Kraken. That was likely because the "D" who was transformed into Kraken imprinted on Mononobe Mitsuki and transferred the authority to her by her own will. That's what I think.」
「Then, Shinomiya Miyako was—」
If Vritra's conjecture was right, Shinomiya Miyako was in love—she sought Mitsuki after she turned into Kraken……however she lent her authority to Mitsuki and made her annihilated her.
In other words…….
I was able to imagine it from the words and action of Shinomiya Miyako who I encountered at Atlantis's city but……her fate was just too sad that it hurt my chest.
「I-I'm telling thee don't show me that kind of sorrowful face! Thou are making me want to cry too! In other words, what I'm saying is that I'm allowing thee to use the true seventh authority too in a limited fashion!!」
Vritra hit my chest repeatedly and looked at me tearfully.
The humane expression that she had never showed until now made intimacy to also rise inside me. I put my hand on her head.
「Sorry, right now I have to properly think about what's ahead instead of the past. And—does that mean right now I can create Dark Matter without any limitation and do biological conversion?」
However Vritra shook her head.
「No, thou are permitted to use my seventh authority only for biological conversion to take the same form like Angolmois. I can't permit thee to something like unlimited use of Dark Matter—naturally, I also won't allow thee to supply Iris Freya with it.」

She stared still into my eyes with a gaze that was filled with her will to not yield this point no matter what. Like that Vritra told me solemnly.
However her small shoulders were trembling.
For the current Vritra, getting scolded or criticized by me over this matter would definitely give her a great shock.
That was why I sighed once and sorted out my feeling before smiling at her.
「Got it. It's already a great help to be able to have the method to take the same appearance like Angolmois──I'm thankful. But if there is a limitation placed in its use, I'll have to ask you Vritra for help in constructing Marduk.」
「──Of course. Thou can leave that to me!」
Vritra puffed out her chest with a relieved look.
「Then you should also go back to your room and change into your uniform quickly Vritra. The briefing is going to start soon.」
We were deep in talk, so the designated time was almost here.
I tightened my necktie and tidied up my clothes.
「Hmph, there is no need for me to go through such trouble.」
Vritra formed Dark Matter around her without moving. And then Vritra had changed into her uniform when I blinked.
「……You already have uniform in your room, don't be lazy like that.」
「H,? Do thou think that this is a pointless usage of Dark Matter? Thou have a bad memory. I already said that there won't be any effect to the total amount of Dark Matter for creating lifeless object.」
「No, what I want to say that before long you will get scolded by Mitsuki if you keep taking shortcut like that but──we can't keep talking idly like this here.」
I headed toward the door with a sigh. Vritra followed me with a small jog and grabbed my left hand from the side.
「It will be troublesome if the change in color of thy dragon crest is noticed. I shall hide it like this.」
「……Roger, I'm counting on you.」
I felt that this was making us stood out further instead, but Vritra looked strangely happy so I didn't shake off her hand.
And then naturally the matter of the change in color of my dragon crest got found out when I was on the way to the bridge with everyone but──Vritra didn't let go of my hand even then.
.

Part 3

「About the approaching giant object—from its shape, the possibility that it's one of Angolmois's neck is big according to Atla's analysis.」
We the members of Brunhilde class gathered inside the bridge. There Major Loki reported the situation with a businesslike tone.
The monitor projected the image of sea from the sky. It was displaying the overlapping outlines of the giant object that was detected by various radars. The machine intelligence Atla was flying around in the screen. She spoke after Major Loki.
「The movement of Angolmois's main body is sealed, so I believe that it cut off one of its necks that was in a relatively loose binding and made it to chase after us.」
Charlotte sighed heavily inside another screen that projected the image of Midgard.
「To think the enemy would play that kind of hand……at least we have finished the minimum preparation but—the separated neck and the spreading End Matter—which one we should deal with first……」
Major Loki also nodded hearing that.
「The resupply and maintenance of Naglfar are also completed. We can move anytime, but the command of the current mission is entrusted to all of you members of Brunhilde class. Therefore I shall move as one of the pawns. Also the currently approaching neck shall be called Angolmois One while the other necks will also have number assigned to them. After all there is a possibility of each one of them acting independently.」
Major Loki said that and looked around at us.
Then Vritra opened her mouth.
「I believe that we should destroy Angolmois One first physically.」
「Fumu……but if we do that, won't the target return to be End Matter when it lose its form?」
Major Loki asked the obvious question. Vritra nodded back to him.
「Yes, so we will illuminate that darkness once more with Neun's light. With the even mor powerful "Shamash" using the Apocalypse factor from the whole mankind as "light source".」
Vritra paused for a moment there and strongly gripped my hand that was still holding her hand.
「If Angolmois's true body is within the neck, its core, the skull will be exposed. But conversely if it isn't, the darkness that is nothing more than

outer shell should vanish. And then—if the neck return to its original form, then the amount of light will be insufficient and our plan will be at impasse.」
Vritra talked about the important of the battle that we would enter after this with a grave tone.
Mitsuki who was standing beside me tightened her expression and opened her mouth.
「We don't know where is the "true body" Vritra mentioned is located inside Angolmois, so either way we don't have a choice to run away from this.」
And then Mitsuki turned her gaze to entrust the final decision to me.
Everyone else also stared straight at me. Even Major Loki and Charlotte were waiting for my words.
I wasn't a commander, but as the one who would directly face Angolmois—the responsibility hanging on my shoulder was greater than anyone.
That was why, I had to speak up here.
I took a deep breath and made the declaration to start everything.
「We will immediately construct Marduk and intercept Angolmois One together with Naglfar. After crushing it and confirming that its true body isn't there, we will immediately head toward its main body to attack.」
「Yes—Nii-san, let's go.」
Mitsuki nodded.
「Mononobe, let's do our best!!」
Iris raised both her hands and yelled energetically.
We couldn't stop anymore.
The night to dream about the future had entered the dawn and the battle that gambled the fate of the planet had begun.
However among everyone who started moving, Kili was the only one who stared at Iris with a gaze that was filled with grief—.
.

Eat, eat, eat, eat—.
Eat the countless lives filling the sea and advanced.
The End Matter that was defined into a shape couldn’t absorb life and possibility into the darkness.
Therefore, eat.
Bit, chew, swallow, and digest the life that contained endless possibility.
Trampling on those who was raised by mother Gaia and rejoiced in their life felt very pleasant.
Because “I” hate Gaia.
The giant skull that was dragging the corpses of the rabbles with it to invade the inside of the sea was filled with rage and hatred.
Gaia made use of me.
Gaia isolated me.
Those living in Gaia pushed an authority that I didn’t know what to do with into me.
It was a power that I obtained not because I wished it. It wasn’t my role.
Don’t screw with me, don’t screw with me, don’t screw with me—.
The voice of resentment flooded out.
The bottom of the sea that originally should be quiet was stirred up by scream of despair.
I was showed a dream where my solitude ended.
The mate that I imprinted on was taken away from right before my eyes.
Hate, hate, hate, hate, hate—.
I hated the black dragon who dangled unreachable hope before my eyes.
I hated the human who obstructed my path to my mate and killed me.
I’ll kill him, kill him, kill him—.
Even though I was already a corpse that lost my authority, this revenge had to be carried out no matter what.
All the dead pushed on my back.
They affirmed that this anger and hatred were justified.
Then I shall run as my impulse drove me.
.
My bitter enemy, remember my name.
.
I was—we were once a protector of Gaia.

We were cut off from the main body to chase after the bitter enemy. We were the neck that shall administer the death and the end of Gaia.
And leading that neck was three skulls.
.
My name is, Leviathan.
My name is, Basilisk.
My name is, Hraesvelgr.
.
O you who stole our mates and brought despair and demise to us.
O all the people who lived on Gaia.
We deny—your existence.

Epilogue

.
I waited inside the darkness.
While maintaining my personality as Shinomiya Miyako.
While holding the soul of Shion Zwei Shinomiya deep inside my chest.
I didn't understand the situation outside.
I had no turn until End Matter swallowed Gaia and the rebirth of the world began.
No, surely Mitsuki……and him would stop it, so my chance to create the next world would never come.
That was why I just needed to wait.
For the time when I was liberated from this darkness.
The moment when my life of Shinomiya Miyako ended and I woke up as Shion Zwei Shinomiya.
But, it was boring to just wait.
There was nothing to do, so I thought of a lot of things.
While doing that, a question suddenly came up in my mind.
—I wonder why Angolmois is choosing the core of the new world from other life.
I knew.
Just how long the journey Angolmois had traveled until here.
Just how much suffering it had tasted in order to refuse the end.
And yet, Angolmois's origin—the thing that could be called as its true body wasn't trying to create the new world by itself.
What it chose was the dead invading dragons.
"Eternal Longevity" Bahamut.
"Anomalous Dawn" Nyarlathotep.
"True Obliteration" Ragnarok.
And then the dragon that used me as vessel—"Heavy Tremor" Nova.
Four candidates.
The powerful beings that were judged to possess power that was worthy to be the god of the new world.
The one who survived from among them was this me.
Right now I had obtained the right to become the core of the new world.
—But, was it really alright like this?
Angolmois was a monster that swallowed "the end" of countless beings and turned into a darkness that devoured other worlds.

I could think that I was chosen as the representative of that collective consciousness.
However……there was thing that I only understood because I became the “representative”.
This darkness had a core. Its point of beginning existed.
If that thing wished for it, it could become the representative without even doing the selection battle that was like a kodoku curse.
Then, why didn’t it wish for it?
Or perhaps, it actually had something else that it wished for.
It really weighed my mind.
I was hopelessly curious, so I tried asking.
.
「Just……what is it that you want to do?」
.
My voice was swallowed into the darkness.
The answer to that was──.
.
*
──Main engine ignited. Main wings at both sides, deployed. Gravity control device activated──.
After focusing the mind and giving the command, the silver Deus Dragon(machine dragon) growled.
Anti-Dragon Battleship Marduki took form once more with Vritra’s help.
I was staring at the sinking island below on its deck.
Jeanne, Shinomiya-sensei, and I served as the linkers who operated Marduk.
I would separate from Marduk when charging at Angolmois’s main body, so Jeanne alone wouldn’t be enough as linker.
Because two linkers were needed to control this giant battleship at minimum, I asked Shinomiya-sensei to help too.
──Switching airframe control to Shinomiya-sensei. Transferring weapon control to Jeanne.
For the time being I entrusted Marduk to the two who were in the bridge in order to have them familiarized themselves with controlling the ship without me.
When I turned my gaze to the starboard side, there was the figure of Naglfar starting to float over there.
「──Hey, Yuu.」
A voice came from behind me. I turned around.
Kili stood there looking like she wanted to say something.
Currently we were the only two on the deck.
My Anti-Gravity and Kili’s Muspelheim could deal with various situations, so we were on standby here as external combat force.
Everyone else was still inside the ship for their own safety.
「What is it, Kili?」

I noticed that Kili was worrying about something, so I asked her what was the matter and waited for her reply.
Then she made a determined expression and met my gaze before slowly opening her mouth.
「……I wonder if you haven't noticed Yuu. Or perhaps you forget? About the authority that Iris-chan have――」
「The authority that Iris has, it's "Catastrophe(End Time)" isn't it? Is there……something about it?」
I asked back like that. Kili made an irritated expression hearing that.
「Do you really not understand? Iimmediately felt confused when Iris-chan came to me to consult about "the future that should be protected". Now that Iris-chan can control the dragonification, I wonder if perhaps she can also look directly at that future.」
「Basilisk's future sight huh……」
I remembered the hardship we went through because of that ability that Basilisk had.
Basilisk's eyes were looking at the scene after things weathered――the future scene. Because of that it could foresight our attack and we faced a lot of difficulties to deal a decisive blow against it.
「Yes, it won't be strange if Iris-chan can do the same thing when she is in a dragonified state. Or rather――if she is concerned about her future, there is no reason not to test it.」
「……That might be. But Basilis's future sight is closer to be a physical simulation rather than fate prediction. It's not something that can predict the specifics of the result of a battle where the situation constantly changes chaotically.」
That was why I didn't particularly consider about that thing.
If we looked at the future in the current condition, we might saw a future of the world getting swallowed by End Matter and a newly reborn world taking its place.
However that future could be changed by a single action of human.
Iris never mentioned anything about it, so there was no need to bring it up intentionally.
But Kili's expression darkened for some reason.
「Yes, it's just as you say Yuu――we won't really be able to count on what we see no matter what it is. But I once tried asking her just in case. I asked Iris-chan, whether she can see the future or not.」
「Did she――give you a bad answer?」
As expected even I felt anxious hearing that and urged Kili to continue.
Then Kili shook her head and opened her mouth hesitantly.
「Iris-chan said――that she can't see anything. Iris-chan herself thought that she failed. But what I'm thinking is……」
Kili slightly paused there before continuing with a stiff voice.
「Iris-chan couldn't see the future――perhaps because she won't be in it.」

Afterword

.
This is Tsukasa.
Thank you very much for picking up the fourteenth volume, Unlimited Fafnir XIV Rainbow Piece.
This whole volume ended up as a volume of “the night before final battle”.
At first I planned to cram the final battle too into one book, but there were a lot of things that I wanted to write and had to write, so I felt that just one book wouldn’t be enough at all.
However due to the leeway that I got, I was able to write various scenes that I wouldn’t be able to write if I only used one volume.
I’ll be pleased if you readers can enjoy the night before final battle that Yuu and others held in their own way.
And then naturally because this volume is about the “previous night”, the “final battle” will be waiting at the next volume.
This will be the climax of this story. The volume will be the end of the battle that has continued for long.
I’m also thinking that it will be nice if I can write sequel, or extra story, or a collection of short stories after that, so perhaps calling the next volume as “last volume” might not be really accurate, but I believe that there is no doubt that volume will become a great juncture.
I’ll be happy if everyone can accompany this series until the end.
—It’s still a bit too early to enter the thanking section here.
Actually there are a lot of other things that I want to write about, but it might become spoiler if I touch on the story’s content, so it’s difficult.
And so I’ll write one thing that is unrelated with the main story.
As the series continued for long, people sometimes told me “It’s amazing that you can think up a long story like this”, but in my case, there is a reason for that.
When I got an idea of a story that I want to write, first I would write it no matter what as simple plot (summary and character setting). But that doesn’t mean that all those ideas will end up as project, and of course I also have no time to write everything, so the majority of those plots get buried as shapeless idea.
However when I created a new story or thinking about how to continue my current series, those buried ideas can change into resources.

Naturally this Unlimited Fafnir also got fragments of those buried plots fused into it.
By fusing development, setting, and characters that originally can be written in other story, the tale naturally become thicker and element of surprise that I didn't think up at first will also appear.
Well, this can also simply be called that what I can think up "now" isn't enough that I have to use my "past" saving though……(Sweat).
In other words it's important to accumulate! Something like that. Perhaps.
This doesn't only apply to light novel, if there is something that you want to create or continue, all of you should also treasure your past. I believe that one day it will surely help you down the line.
And──to conclude that feel good story, we shall enter the thanking section now.
Korie Riko-sensei. Thank you very much for drawing the lovely and cool Kili illustration for this volume! The color illustrations of Mitsuki and Ren are also cute.
My editor Shouji-sama. Thank you very much for giving me place and time where I can write to my heart's content. Your quick contact and pertinent advice are a great help for me. Please take care of me from here on too.
And then to all the readers who has accompanied Unlimited Fafnir until this far, my biggest thanks to you all. I'll work hard to deliver the greatest climax next volume to all of you.
Then, see you again.
.

April 2017 Tsukasa

あとがき
キーリVSヴリトラの
シーンがお気に入りです。
柚リコ枝

Credits

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Table of Contents

1. Illustration
2. Prologue
3. Chapter 1 – Universal Ruler Shamash
    1. Part 1
    2. Part 2
    3. Part 3
    4. Part 4
4. Chapter 2 – The Clear Dragon at Battle Again
    1. Part 1
    2. Part 2
    3. Part 3
    4. Part 4
5. Chapter 3 – The Previous Night’s Game Party
    1. Part 1
    2. Part 2
    3. Part 3
    4. Part 4
6. Chapter 4 – Rainbow Colored Piece
    1. Part 1
    2. Part 2
    3. Part 3
7. Epilogue
8. Afterword
9. Credits